



LISBON, Portugal: More than 1.5 million young people participated in the closing Mass of World Youth Day (WYD) in Lisbon's Tejo Park on August 6, presided over by Pope Francis on the last day of his five-day visit here. At the end of the Mass, he announced that there will be a Jubilee for young people in Rome in 2025 and that the next WYD will be held in Seoul, the capital of South Korea, in 2027.

To end "Catholic Woodstock" — as WYD has been called by the Portuguese press — Pope Francis told the weary-eyed and sleep-deprived young people in Lisbon not to let their "great dreams" of changing the world be "stopped by fear."

In his homily, the Pope asked for "a bit of silence" from the pilgrims who, after staying overnight in Lisbon's Tejo Park following the previous night's vigil, were already dancing at 6.00am to techno music mixed by a DJ priest before the Pope's arrival.

The congregation had attended a vigil led by the Holy Father the previous evening in this same park that included music and dance, individual testimonies, an eight-minute interactive conversation between Francis and young people and an hour of Eucharistic adoration.

In what local authorities were describing as the largest event in the history of the nation, young people slept out all night along the banks of the Tagus River to be present with the 86-year-old Pope, who consistently used the week's events to underscore the importance of intergenerational relationships. The week included prayer, Mass, music concerts, religious talks, and cultural events, among other activities.

"Let's all repeat this phrase in our hearts: 'Don't be afraid,'" he told the hushed crowd. "Jesus knows the hearts of each one of you, the successes and the failures, He knows your hearts," Pope Francis said. "And today He tells you, here in Lisbon for this World Youth Day: 'Don't be afraid.'"

The Pope, who arrived in the country on Aug 2, used his final remarks to encourage the youth to follow the example of Jesus and be "sensitive to situations all around us, to other cultures, to the pleas of the poor and the vulnerable, and to the cry of our wounded and mistreated earth."

"How good it is to listen to Jesus, to listen to one another, and thus to become capable of dialogue in a world where so many people go through life alone and concerned only with themselves," he said.

Flags from almost every nation on earth — from countries as diverse and far away as Ukraine, China, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Samoa — flew high above the crowds as the Pope spoke. On the ground, sleeping bags, tarps, inflatable mattresses and leftover food were scattered about from what was nearly a 24-hour stay in the open air for some pilgrims.

At the front of the crowd, which extended across both banks of Lisbon's Trancão River, 30 cardinals, 700 bishops and 10,000 priests concelebrated the Mass with Pope Francis. Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa was seated in the front row.

Cardinal Manuel do Nascimento Clemente of Lisbon thanked the Pope for making WYD an opportunity for young people to come together and build a better tomorrow "after a pandemic that has confined them and otherwise distanced them from each other and from the best (version) of themselves."

Cardinal Kevin Farrell, prefect of the Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life, which organises WYD, thanked Pope Francis for bringing together in Lisbon young people "who have been pilgrims of peace in times in which many, too many, wars are being fought in so many parts of the world."

In remarks after Mass, the Pope also recalled the suffering of Ukraine and asked young people if he, "an old man," could share a dream of his: "the dream of peace, the dream that young people may pray for peace, live in peace and build a peaceful future."

Using the Portuguese word for thank you — *obrigado* — the Pope thanked the organisers of WYD, the volunteers who made it possible and the city of Lisbon, which he prayed would "remain in the memory of these young people as a house of fraternity and a city of dreams."

"And *obrigado* to all of you, dear young people," he said before praying the *Angelus*. "God sees all the good you are, and only He knows what He has planted in your heart. Go from here with what God put in your heart. You are a sign of peace for the world, showing how different nationalities, languages, and histories can unite instead of divide. You are the hope of a different world. Thank you for this. Onwards!"

The crowd dispersed after Mass, streaming through the streets of Lisbon, filling closed-down highways while waving the flags of the world.

— Agencies

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How reporting from WYD reinvigorated my faith

It's early afternoon in Lisbon, Portugal, on the opening day of World Youth Day (WYD) 2023, and my mother had just sent me a text message. "Son, bring me some of those Youth Day t-shirts, and anything to put around my neck as a souvenir," she writes. "How I wish I could be there with you!"

At first, I took it as a playful note from a mother to her only son, who is a journalist covering WYD, eagerly awaiting the arrival of Pope Francis the next day. But this message communicates a deeper yearning than my mother's apparently simple desire for branded merchandise.

I had been here for over a fortnight, and each day the atmosphere grew more electric as pilgrims from every country descended on one of the oldest cities in Europe for the largest gathering of youth in the world. It seemed there were makeshift stages that erupted with song in every square; every café sounded like a living tower of Babel. The city was teeming with youth — one group I knew slept, tightly packed together, in a train depot for a week.

I confess, I can be a little cynical. It is a trait that serves me well as a journalist, keeping me questioning and always in search of truth. As a baptised Christian, it can lead, more often than not, to despondency — even despair. However, witnessing WYD in person made it difficult to focus on any of the hopelessness. Experiencing the vitality, energy and excitement of young Catholics has been a reinvigorating experience for me, and I cannot help but feel great pride in being Catholic, and belonging to a Church of sinners and saints alike. I believe that's the reason why my mom sent me that message; she also saw and felt the energy that is still present in the Church and it reminded her that faith is alive and that her faith is not in vain — and she wanted to be a part of it, too.

In a Church riddled with scandals of abuse of power and sex, financial impropriety and political wars, it can be easy to lose hope and a sense of why we continue to be Catholic. Mega-events like this, where the Church's faithful gather in celebration and worship, bolster us. They offer a glimpse of the life that is still here among the youngest generations of the Church's faithful — even amid the



(photo/WYD Facebook)

shame and disrepute that sometimes creep in and bring us to question why we remain — and fan it into flame.

I am not naive enough to think that there were not many young people who were here to simply party it up, and soak in the nightlife of a city as metropolitan as this one, at a time when it's bustling with young people from all over the world, and to lay their eyes on the Pope. At the same time, I can't ignore what I have already seen of the lived faith of scores of young people over the days.

Even if they were here for the party of a lifetime — and why shouldn't they be — I have also seen many of them taking long periods of solace and quiet in churches and chapels day and night around the city. It seems to me that they were here because they wanted a deeper encounter with the Lord and were prepared to dedicate some time, amid the euphoria of WYD, to seek and pursue that desire they had to meet God. They, like Moses, wanted to meet the Lord, "face to face, as a person speaks to a friend." May we, like those who saw Moses entering "the meeting tent" and the scores that were present at WYD, be inspired to do as they did, and "rise and worship at the entrance of [our] own tents." — **By Fr Ricardo da Silva, SJ, America**

Let us trust in the Lord

It seems that we have been using more of our left brain than our right brain. And this is one of the reasons why we find it very difficult to relate to God and interpret the Bible correctly. A great book about vocation as a gift from God by Luke Burgis and Joshua Miller called *Unrepeatable: Cultivating a unique call of every person*, talks about this:

"In his book, 'The Master and His Emissary,' Ian McGilchrist shows that there has been an increasing reliance on the left hemisphere of the brain over the past few 100 years (a result of Cartesian dualism, the industrial revolution, technology, and other factors). As a consequence, we live a more calculated life, relating to the world in a way that is suspicious of gifts. Calculated living prefers earning, not receiving... The right brain (the 'Master') is an open system where we take in new experiences, seeing the whole rather than the parts. It's where we wonder. The left brain (the 'Emissary') is different. It's a close system that operates within the boundaries of what it has received. It likes certainty more than adventure, maps more than metaphor, mechanisms more than living things... The two hemispheres of the brain see the world in radically different ways, but they have a partnership.

The right brain gives us a way of seeing the world that is opened to the dynamism of new experiences. As the right brain takes in new aspects of reality, the left brain constantly revises its models in order to make sense of what it is receiving. There's a feedback loop. Wonder is the attitude that people have in the presence of Jesus in the Gospels."



With this mindset, let us approach the readings of the 19th Sunday in Ordinary time. In today's Gospel, Jesus does something scientifically, physically, and humanly impossible. He walks on water towards his disciples who were in the boat, in the midst of a raging storm on the Galilean Sea. But the more amazing thing is that Jesus invited Peter to do the same and Peter too, succeeded in walking on water. Peter, a mere mortal, was doing something impossible, like Jesus.

This means that we too can achieve the impossible like Peter when we fix our eyes

on the Lord. Peter got out of the boat which, traditionally symbolises the Church, but the boat can also mean our own comfort zone, our false sense of security, our laziness, fear, selfishness, insecurities, hurts and past traumas, (whatever is keeping me away from believing that I can achieve the impossible for God).

Jesus is asking us to come out of our "boats" and trust Him. He is inviting us to walk on water like Peter — I can walk on water like Peter, if I just fix my eyes on Christ, on His gaze at me. These impossible things in my life — (not referring to miraculous or magical events like body levitation or changing water into wine) but "impossible" acts like forgiving and loving the one you hate most, a husband and wife reconciling with each other and saving their marriage after years of hurts and fights, a young person leaving all that he loves behind to answer God's call to be a priest or religious or missionary, a porn addict able to be free from porn to live in chastity and still be joyful, a parent giving up his high-paying job just to be a full time dad to care for his autistic child, a young girl becoming free from depression after finding a support community of her peers that offers a sense of belonging and genuine love, etc. But when I start focusing on the fears and worries in my life, when I start counting the cost for being selfless, the price for being generous and charitable, I start drowning like Peter (because he took his eyes off Jesus and was distracted by the waves and storm). Nevertheless, when that happens, all I need to do is put aside my pride and shout out the

Reflecting on our Sunday Readings

with Fr Martinian Lee

19th Sunday of Ordinary Time (A)

Readings: 1 Kings 19:9, 11-13

Romans 9:1-5;

Gospel: Matthew 14:22-33

Lord's name for help and He will reach out to me and save me. The question begs, how do we learn to truly trust in the Lord?

Like Elijah, we can truly meet God in the silence of our lives. In the "gentle breeze" moments. I am referring to the power of contemplation and deep reflection. In contemplation and meditation, we allow our right brain to flourish and wonder. To see the world and our lives very differently through God's lens. Contemplation and deep reflection can only come with having a prayer life. Approaching Jesus and His Gospel with the attitude of wonder, is believing that God is truly present and speaking to me when I intentionally seek Him like Elijah. We need to take a break from our handphones, gadgets and our social media hits and go to our "caves" intentionally, into the realm of God, and there we will see, hear and encounter Him. Then you will see Him giving you the grace and power to walk on water like Peter, doing the impossible in your life!

Now, will you come out from your "boat" and walk to Him?



KUALA LUMPUR ARCHDIOCESE

Diary of Archbishop Julian Leow

August

- 19 Confirmation – Church of the Holy Redeemer, Klang
- 19 Confirmation – Church of St Anne, Port Klang
- 20 Confirmation – Church of St Paul the Hermit, Bestari Jaya
- 26 Confirmation – Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Puchong
- 26 Confirmation – Church of St Ignatius, PJ
- 28 Meeting – AOHD Board of Management
- 29-30 Monthly Clergy Recollection
- 31 Opening Mass – Catholic Charismatic Renewal Peninsular Malaysia



PENANG DIOCESE

Diary of Bishop Sebastian Francis

August

- 13 Confirmation — Church of the Divine Mercy, Penang @ 9.00am
- 14 Vigil Mass — Feast of the Assumption, Church of the Assumption, Penang @ 8.00pm (Rosary at 7.30pm)
- 15 Mass and Blessing of Monastery of the Putri Karmel Sisters, Balik Pulau @ 10.00am
- 16 Blessing of the Diocesan Archives — Pusat Keuskupan Katolik, Penang @ 4.00pm
- 20 Confirmation — Church of the Immaculate Conception, Penang @ 11.30am
- 22 Meeting — Council of Priests (COP), Stella Maris, Penang @ 10.30am



MALACCA JOHORE DIOCESE

Diary of Bishop Bernard Paul

August

- 16 Meeting – Diocesan Finance Committee, MAJODI Centre
- 19 Meeting – MJ Mission School Committee, Oasis, Kluang
- 25 Mass for Malaysia Focolare Communities @ Mariapolis – MAJODI Centre
- 26 Confirmation – Church of the Immaculate Conception, Johor Bahru
- 31/8 - Deliverance & Healing Programme (Modules 7 & 8) – MAJODI Centre

Listening to the cry of the Earth and the poor

By Marilyn Menezes Simon

KUALA LUMPUR: With its continued focus on restoring critical ecosystems, the Kuala Lumpur Archdiocesan Creation Justice Ministry (CJM), organised the *Mangroves Are Amazing* event and successfully planted 300 Rhizophora trees, at the Kuala Selangor Nature Park (KSNP), July 22.

In a brilliant display of concern for the environment and inclusiveness, the event had 105 environmental enthusiasts, from different faiths and age groups.

The CJM Ecclesiastical Assistant Fr Andrew Manickam, OFM Cap, warmly thanked everyone for their time and prayed for the gift of creation and for protection. KSNP project coordinator Ashok said, the area was originally intended for a golf course. However, it is now conserved and safeguarded by KSNP in partnership with the Malaysian Nature So-

ciety, and the area has become self-sustaining.

Over 200 species of birds, from 25 countries, visit the park during different seasons. The mangroves play a crucial role in decarbonisation. These endangered plants can store vast amounts of carbon. Mangrove forests are key weapons in the fight against climate change.

The environmental advocates were divided into two groups – a bigger group that planted the trees and another to help prepare the 40 saplings. After the event, the participants freshened up and enjoyed bonding over a meal. Ten-year-old Shaun said, “It was a day of exploring. I had fun!” The volunteers agreed that connecting and making a contribution to care for ‘our common home’ is indeed fulfilling.

The mangrove planting activity was a follow-up of the Run4Unity, organised in May



Distributing provisions to the DBKL cleaners.

2023, by the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform of the Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development. A total of 50 participants collectively completed 240.12km which translates into the planting of a minimum of 200 mangrove trees.

The cry of the Earth is intimately linked with the cry of the poor. An outreach to friends keeping the streets clean was held on July 15. Individuals, families and BECs, contributed provisions and organised over 130 bags. The mission continued for a week with items sent to school children, families and homes. CJM thanks everyone for their overflowing generosity and prayers.

During the July Clergy Recollection, saplings were distributed to the clergy to encourage tree planting in the parishes and in remembrance of grandparents, on the Third World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly.



Volunteers planting Rhizophora trees at the Kuala Selangor National Park.



Malacca Johore Diocese News Update #142

F12
NEWS
UPDATES

Greetings to you from MAJODI Centre. The Church lives to evangelise. The WYD 2023 at Lisbon was a grace-filled moment, a time to touch the young. Yet the young also witnessed racism, inefficiencies and long delays. Back here, the 3Rs i.e. race, religion and royalty continue to be a pain and a bane. Can we be more authentic, more constant and more consistent in what we say and what we do? People can spot a fake. Whether we are evangelising, witnessing or promoting ourselves, our image, our community or the nation, can we compromise on what is true?

“CONNECTING Times: Mycelium is a fungus that expands underground creating a network of connection between all plant species, something like the internet, that allows them not only to communicate, but also to take care of themselves, protect themselves, feed themselves, and stock up water.

When a tree from the forest is cut down, this mycelium communicates to the many trees in the forest that one of them is dying and all the other trees through the mycelium begin to care for the remaining trunk to try to save that life. They feed it, water it, protect it because that dying log is part of the forest family. They may reflect interconnectedness, interrelatedness and interdependency. But their message is simple: *we live for one another or we perish.* We have a lot to learn from our older brothers, from the trees and the forest and above all from Our Mother Earth. (Claudio d'Sposito)

A Thought for the Week: Six Wisdoms

{1} Once the villagers decided to pray for rain. On the day of prayer all the people gathered, but only one boy came with an umbrella. That's FAITH.

{2} When you throw babies in the air, they laugh because they know you will catch them. That's TRUST.

{3} Every night we go to bed without any assurance of being alive the next morning, but still we set the alarm to wake up. That's HOPE.

{4} We plan big things for tomorrow in spite of zero knowledge of the future. That's CONFIDENCE.

{5} We see the world suffering, but still we get married and have children. That's LOVE.

{6} On an old man's shirt was written a sentence 'I am not 80 years old; I am sweet 16 with 64 years of experience.' That's ATTITUDE.

Lesson from the ordinary: Some see, some do not! Every little thing communicates. See beyond the common and the ordinary, and you will see wisdom at work.

Announcements for this Week:

1. The *MJD Vocation Promotion Team*, headed by Fr Adrian Francis, is organising a talk on the diocesan priesthood entitled “I Am Mission” on August 31 at St Peter's Church Malacca, from 10.00am to 1.00pm. A Facebook account on vocations is now available for your viewing. Young people, the Lord has not stopped calling.

This Week's Question and Query.

The Q asks: Is faith a certainty or a mystery?

1. *Many are too sure* about explanations, events, encounters and experiences. Remember the four blind men attempting to describe an elephant by touch. They only perceived one aspect: they saw a rope, a tree trunk, a trumpet and brush. Very certain but they were far from the fact.

2. *Religious folks tend to be very certain* about faith matters. Reality has often silenced evangelisers, Sunday school teachers and good Catholics.

3. *Richard Rohr said “Religion has lost sight of Jesus’ message.* It has not tended to create seekers or searchers. It has not tended to create honest, humble people who trust that God is always beyond them.

“We aren't focused on the great mystery.

4. *Rather, religion has tended to create people who think they have God in their pockets,* and they have quick, easy and fluent answers.

“People know the great mystery cannot be that simple and touchable.

If the great mystery is indeed the Great Mystery, it will lead us into paradox, into darkness, and into journeys that never cease.”

Take care. Be safe. Let's pray for the diocese and the Malaysian Church as we prepare for the coming Diocesan Pastoral Assemblies. God bless you all.

Bernard Paul

Bishop Bernard Paul

Catholic teachers called to teach from the heart

JOHOR BAHRU: Christian educators play a vital role in shaping the hearts and minds of the next generation, instilling academic knowledge, and guiding students toward spiritual growth and a deeper understanding of Christian values.

The Catholic Teachers Association of Johor held its annual meeting at the Church of the Immaculate Conception on July 22.

Bishop Bernard Paul graced the event. In his address, the prelate reminded all Catholic teachers to see the truth, good, and beauty of being a teacher.

Southern Infant Jesus coordinator and MJ-MSA representative Elizabeth Chong and Regional Lasallian Education Council chairperson for Negeri Sembilan, Melaka,

and Johor, Vivienne Cheong were guest speakers. The theme of their talks was *Call to Teach, Teach from the Heart*.

They shared that Catholic educators are entrusted with upholding the mission, vision, and Christian values of their schools, fostering an environment of faith and integrity.

Baptism marks the initiation into the Christian faith and comes with three meaningful gifts. The passport signifies citizenship in God's kingdom, where believers are heirs to eternal life. The fishing rod symbolises the duty to share the Gospel and bring others to Christ with love and compassion. The residence certificate represents belonging to the community of believers, the

Church, and BECs, fostering support and growth.

Teaching is not a mere job; it is a calling from God to impact lives positively. Christian educators view their profession as a vocation, embracing their role in shaping the character and values of future generations.

To be effective, Christian teachers must emulate Christ inside and outside the classroom. By showing Christ's love, compassion, and patience, they create a nurturing and safe learning environment. Living out Christian values in their personal lives sets an example for others to follow.

Besides imparting knowledge, educators are called to engage with students on a deeper level, making a positive impact in their lives. This mission involves teaching well, displaying love and care for the students, and being a genuine role model.

To accomplish this, Christian educators should extend their reach to students facing difficult circumstances, such as those

from broken families, impoverished backgrounds, or needing emotional support. They aim to touch the lives of their students, acknowledging their unique qualities as children of God and valuing each individual's personality and learning style.

Christian educators should demonstrate patience, understanding that each student's journey is different. They come down to the level of their students, humbly connecting with them to build meaningful relationships and trust.

Ultimately, by living out these principles, Christian educators fulfil their responsibility to Christ, becoming Christ-like in both their words and actions within the school setting, leaving a lasting impact on the lives of their students.

By mirroring Christ's teachings in school and personal lives, educators become beacons of God's love, positively influencing students and communities, and leaving a lasting impact on the world.

Commissioning of Sandakan Diocesan Education members

TAWAU: "We pledge our willing service as members of the new Diocesan Education Commission for three years," promised the members of the Sandakan Diocesan Education Commission (DEC) during the sunset Mass July 15 at the Church of the Holy Trinity. The commissioning was solemnised by Fr Nicholas Ong in the presence of their spiritual advisor Fr Raymond Lee.

Earlier they held their first DEC meeting at the church's conference room. DEC chairperson, Zenia Rose Gulitum welcomed the members from the Cathedral of St Mary, Sandakan, the Church of St Dominic, Lahad Datu and the Church of the Holy Trinity, Tawau.

In his opening address, Fr Raymond hoped that the members would share their experiences and wisdom with him as this would help him in giving his advice and opinion particularly pertaining to faith, morals, prayers and social teaching of the Church.

He reminded all on the importance of DEC in encouraging Christian students to take up the Bible Knowledge subject in SPM in the mission school. This is not for academic reasons only; Bible Knowledge will deepen their understanding of their faith. He said the Bible Knowledge subject is the identity of a mission school and he hoped that promoting this subject would be taken seriously.

He shared that the older generation used

to tell him of the glorious days of the old mission schools in producing excellent students in education, sports and discipline, but were sad to see today that the image of the mission schools is not up to the standard of its past. In his note of encouragement, he thanked the members for their boldness in taking up the responsibility and commitment as members of the DEC. "Let us work together, work for the benefit of our students, for the improvement of our school, and work to defend what is left of the Christian identity in the school. Let us be committed, be strong and courageous, be faithful in our service", he concluded.

In the evening, the members were treated to dinner, with the attendance of all the priests and representatives of the mission schools, courtesy of the Holy Trinity DEC members headed by Gerard Tan. During the dinner, the DEC members also got the opportunity to share the joy of celebrating the birthday of Holy Trinity rector, Fr David Garaman.

The next day, the members were given a tour of the Catholic mission schools in Tawau, starting with the Holy Trinity Pre-School, Holy Trinity Primary School, Holy Trinity Secondary School and ended at St Ursula Secondary School. The two-day programme gave the DEC members the opportunity to share and exchange views, suggestions and insights towards the betterment of the Mission schools. — **By DaliusLL**



Commissioning of the members of the Diocesan Education Commission.



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Minor basilica creates inclusive spiritual environment for all

BUKIT MERTAJAM: The Minor Basilica of St Anne bore witness to a momentous and spiritually poignant celebration during the 2023 Feast of St Anne. The theme for this year, *Salt of the Earth, Light of the World*, truly embodied the essence of the event, which unfolded from July 21 to July 30, marking its first reappearance since its inauguration on January 9, 2023.

The festivities commenced with the raising of the flag and blessings bestowed upon the pilgrims' pathway around the church. This ceremonious onset was followed by a heartfelt Volunteer Mass, held a day before the feast, honouring the 1815 volunteers whose valuable contributions were essential in organising this grand event. The Basilica's commitment to being a Synodal Church was evident in its endeavour to include everyone in the celebrations, fostering a spirit of unity and inclusivity.

One of the features of this year's feast was the Prayer Hotline, an innovative platform where the faithful could submit their prayer requests, and dedicated priests would pray for them via WhatsApp throughout the festivities. This modern approach to prayer exemplified the Basilica's willingness to adapt and embrace technology in reaching out to the faithful. Nourishing both the physical and spiritual needs of the pilgrims, the Basilica offered the pilgrims meals daily. This act of hospitality demonstrated the church's dedication to caring for its visitors, ensuring that they felt welcomed and nourished during their spiritual journey.

A truly diverse and inclusive spiritual environment was cultivated by conducting daily Masses in four languages: English, Bahasa Malaysia, Mandarin, and Tamil. This multilingual approach emphasised

the universality of the Catholic faith and allowed attendees from different backgrounds to participate fully in the celebrations. The Feast of St. Anne also addressed the needs of the faithful seeking healing and spiritual solace. Blessed Sacrament Adoration and Healing sessions, animated by religious Sisters and priests, provided attendees with an opportunity to draw closer to Jesus and experience the power of divine grace.

The significance of reconciliation and forgiveness was exemplified by the availability of confessional services near the Shrine of Harmony, formerly known as the Shrine of St. Anne. This sacred space allowed attendees to seek repentance and receive the sacrament of reconciliation, fostering spiritual renewal and growth. Led by religious Sisters, clergy, and acolytes, the Prayer for Healing near the Shrine of Harmony offered a moment of reflection and



Cardinal-elect Sebastian Francis and some of the clergy of the diocese at the Feast of Sts Anne and Joachim, July 29, 2023.

supplication for those in need of physical, emotional, or spiritual healing. The diversity of attendees at the feast was a testament to the universal appeal of beloved St Anne. Catholics and non-Catholics alike came together to honour this revered saint and partake in the collective expression of faith and devotion.

The Basilica ingeniously incorporated QR codes placed around its premises, offering attendees a chance to learn about its historical and symbolic significance. This interactive approach to storytelling engaged the pilgrims and deepened their appreciation for the Basilica's heritage.

A highlight of the celebrations was the awe-inspiring open-air Mass at Dataran St Anne, fostering a sense of communal participation and spiritual unity. The Church further demonstrated its commitment to inclusivity by providing a sign language interpreter for the hearing impaired, during the Mass. Following the open-air

Mass, a procession with the statue of St. Anne traversed the town of Bukit Mertajam, creating a profoundly spiritual ambiance. The symbolic burning of prayer petitions allowed attendees to convey their prayers and intentions to God, adding a personal touch to the spiritual journey. The celebrations culminated with the St Anne Feast concert held at Green Hall, animated by the parish's young people. Their vibrant performances, including live band music, skits, and dance, infused the event with energy and Gospel messages that resonated with all present.

The 2023 Feast of St Anne will be remembered as an important chapter in the history of the newly inaugurated Basilica. With spiritually significant ceremonies, a spirit of unity, and a palpable expression of faith, the event served as a profound testament to the enduring legacy of St Anne and the unwavering devotion of the faithful.



Pilgrims from near and far coming forward to offer their lighted candles and venerate the statue of St Anne.

Called to be a Church that is alive and vibrant

KLANG: Parishioners of the Church of St Anne, and throngs of pilgrims came to celebrate their patron's feast with novena Masses from July 22 to July 31. In response to this year's theme for the celebration, *Restore My Church* a multitude of pilgrims returned after a lapse of a few years to celebrate the feast with much excitement, pomp and joy.

The theme was derived from the valuable insights gathered during the parish's synodal journey. The parish effectively integrated these insights with discerned directions from the 2022 Parish Assembly while acknowledging the Church's present circumstances in the post-COVID-19 era.

It felt like Jesus' call to St Francis of Assisi, "Rebuild my Church," resonates today, as the church seems to be struggling to move ahead with some falling back, fear and anxieties. As such, the parish saw the need for the People of God to come together to listen and reflect on the sacred Scriptures while uniting with the Holy Trinity — "The Father who calls us", "The Son we encounter" and "The Spirit who enables us" — to restore the Church, The Body of Christ.

The gathering of parishioners and pilgrims during the novena Masses was a truly awe-inspiring sight, with a multitude of people coming from all directions from the start of the nine-day novena. The overwhelm-

ing numbers were encouraging, filling the atmosphere with a spirit of joy and unity. During the final few days, the church grounds were simply overflowing with people, even beyond the Mass times. The parishioners felt a little overwhelmed with the great number of people but they managed to make the pilgrims feel welcomed with their warm hospitality.

Parish priest Fr David Arulanatham said his greatest joy was meeting and speaking to the many couples who came to give thanks for the gift of a child were answered. These couples were either pregnant or carrying their newborn child. Their hearts were filled with joy and their tear-filled eyes spoke of the profound emotions they experienced during their journey of hoping, waiting, and trusting in the Lord. Alongside them, other couples joined in prayer, seeking a child with the same spirit of hopeful anticipation and unwavering trust. Among these couples, some were Catholics, while others were from different faith backgrounds.

Befitting the theme, the preachers for the Masses: Capuchin friars Fr Raymond Michael OFM Cap, and Fr John Anandan OFM Cap, as well as Frs William Michael, Joseph Stephen, CSsR and Philip Tay, OCD, did a great job reigniting the spirit to be a church that is alive, proactive and vibrant.



Fr John Anandan, OFM Cap and the faithful walking in procession during the feast day celebration, July 29, 2023.

Archbishop Julian Leow presided and preached at the morning Mass of the Feast Day of Sts Anne and Joachim, on July 26. He reminded the congregation of the need to respect, give recognition and offer hospitality to the elderly at all times. He said that we should also show our gratitude for their sacrifices and love, adding that we have much to learn from them.

The Anointing of the Sick and Elderly after Mass was celebrated by Fr Joseph on July 28. Frs Richard Anthonysamy SJ, Gregory Chan, Andrew Kooi, and Ferdinand Magimay from the Klang district, assisted with the anointing.

Fr David celebrated a special Mass for the young ones with a homily delivered by him and seminarian Alvin Lucas.



The faithful processing during the feast day celebration, July 29, 2023.

Overall, the efforts to instil the theme *Restore My Church*, in the hearts of the People of God, along with its sub-themes and the theme song *Restore My Church* had a significant impact on the parishioners. The sale of t-shirts bearing the theme further strengthened the sense of unity and purpose among them. These

initiatives successfully brought the parishioners together, inspiring them to actively contribute to the Renewing, Rebuilding, and Restoring of the Church. The ultimate goal was to create a more vibrant and proactive church, one that shines as a guiding light for the world, as envisioned in the spirit of *Lumen Gentium*.

Navigating cancer patients

KLANG: A captivating and enlightening introductory talk titled *Why Be a Navigator* was held at the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, July 29. The talk was to enlist empathetic navigators who could offer invaluable support to cancer patients through guided care. This patient navigation programme originated from the renowned American Cancer Society and has been embraced and implemented nationwide by the National Cancer Society of Malaysia (NCSM) as part of their Beacon Initiative project, aimed at extending cancer patient navigation to low and middle-income individuals.

The keynote speaker and Head of the Patient Navigation Services, Vijayalakshmi Silvathorai, (Madam Viji), passionately described a patient navigator as an empathetic individual capable of supporting and empowering cancer-affected individuals, caregivers, and family members throughout their journey from diagnosis to survivorship. The role of navigators is also to help solve problems faced by the patients and, if need be, to seek assistance from NGOs, outside sources or community groups. They act as a bridge between patients and their healthcare professionals and provide essential support services. Madam Viji emphasised that patients often struggle to comprehend medical jargon, and it is the navigators' responsibility to assist them by conveying information in a language they can understand.

During her address, Madam Viji shed light on the myriad challenges cancer patients face, including financial burdens, emotional distress, misconceptions about the disease, language barriers, and family objections. As navigators, individuals are trained to help patients overcome these obstacles and offer the necessary care and support. Drawing from her vast experience in guiding patients, Madam Viji shared touching anecdotes, revealing that sometimes, the



Madam Viji sharing about the patient navigation programme at OLL Klang, July 29, 2023.

biggest challenges arise from the patients' families.

At present, navigation services are available at Hospital Melaka and Hospital Selayang, with plans to expand to other hospitals. In response to a participant's query about finding patients, Madam Viji humorously replied that patients are not hunted down, as doctors refer them to the NCSM. She quipped, "When it rains; it pours." The organisation is now actively recruiting more navigators, providing them with the necessary skills and techniques. Prospective navigators must complete a comprehensive seven-week training course conducted by NCSM, and subsequently fulfil 50 hours of supervised patient navigation.

Carrie Lim, a newly appointed patient navigator, shared her journey after completing the training. Coming from a finance background, she initially felt apprehensive but found the course module to be well-structured and easily comprehensible. Having previously cared for her aunt who battled spleen cancer, Carrie deeply regretted not knowing about this programme earlier, expressing her strong belief that her calling

is to offer solace and support to cancer patients.

In his address, parish priest, Fr Gregory Chan, emphasised that the patient navigation programme is an opportunity to extend a helping hand to the most vulnerable—the least, the last, the lost, and the lonely.

The parish has scheduled another round of introductory talks on **August 19, 2023 (Saturday) from 10.00am to 12noon**. Those interested or merely curious about this cause are warmly invited to attend and explore the possibility of answering their call. For registration, kindly contact Damian at 019 3054441 or Mathew at 012 3235313 via WhatsApp. Parishes keen on organising similar talks to recruit navigators can contact Dr Shumita of NCSM at shumita@nccsm.org.my.

In conclusion, a few parishioners had taken the next step to answer the call as patient navigators and thus hope to impact the lives of cancer patients and their families. With the support of dedicated navigators, the NCSM strives to make the journey through cancer a little less arduous and a lot more hopeful. — **OLL Organising Team**

AOHD visits Rawang parish

RAWANG: The Archdiocesan Office for Human Development (AOHD) director Dr Gary Liew and team made a pit-stop at the Church of St Jude to meet the members of the Parish Integral Human Development Ministry, July 29.

After a simple fellowship, Gary, in his opening address said that he and his team are prepared to listen, dialogue and discern with ministry members.

They then broke into various subgroups to discuss matters concerning the organisation. Several veterans in the ministry shared their experiences in doing their best for the lost, the last, the least and the little.

Some senior members raised questions concerning the poor and the migrants, which Gary answered.

The AOHD team then shared a short video presentation depicting AOHD's mission and vision. Having been around for 31 years, AOHD wants to look into the grey areas where the poor are living in limbo, with no parishes to help them or are between boundaries. AOHD wishes to aid poor parishes that have many such cases. They also wish to focus on the social, mental and well-being of these poor by trying to provide a dignified living environment for them.

In closing, Gary quoted St Mother Theresa, "We think sometimes that poverty is only being hungry, naked and homeless. The poverty of being unwanted, unloved and uncared for is the greatest poverty. We must start in our own homes (churches) to remedy this kind of poverty." Gary aims to visit the 45 parishes in the archdiocese to help him and the team achieve their mission. — **By Mercy Almeida**



DIOCESE OF PENANG
PKK/BDN/2023/08/165

1. An encounter to remember at the Feast of St Anne and St Joachim, Bukit Mertajam

My heartfelt thanks to all the pilgrims, volunteers, donors, celebrants and concelebrants and every single person who has contributed in making the Feast of St Anne this year an enriching, grace-filled and memorable celebration for all. May you experience the power of prayer and intercession in your lives as your faith continues to be strengthened. St Anne and St Joachim, pray for us.

2. New Appointment — Cardinal-elect Sebastian Francis

I sincerely thank you for your continued prayers, congratulatory wishes and warm greetings on my recent appointment by the Holy Father announced at the *Angelus* on July 9, 2023 as Cardinal-elect to the Consistory to be held on Sept 30 in Rome. I humbly ask for your continued prayers for me in my priestly journey.

3. Invitation for a Thanksgiving Solemn Mass at Minor Basilica of St Anne, Bukit Mertajam

I take this opportunity to invite all of you to this historical celebration to unite as one Universal Church to give thanks and celebrate my appointment to the College of Cardinals, along with my brother bishops from the Catholic Bishops' Conference of

Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei which will be held on January 8, 2024, Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, at 6.00pm. Those who are unable to be physically present may also follow the celebration through the live broadcast.

4. Congratulations to Fr Martin Arlando

We praise and thank God for His graces and blessings bestowed upon Fr Martin Arlando who has recently completed his two years of full-time studies online on Academic Programme Ecclesiastical Licentiate in Canon Law at St Paul University, Canada. We rejoice together with him and congratulate him on the successful completion of his studies.

5. Silver Sacerdotal Jubilee Celebration of Fr Nelson Joseph Jacob

With grateful hearts we celebrate 25 years of faithfulness in the priestly Silver Jubilee of Fr Nelson Joseph Jacob, assistant priest of the Minor Basilica of St Anne, Bukit Mertajam on August 7. Continue to keep him in prayers as we praise and thank God for the gift of priesthood.

6. Appointment of Administrator for the Parish of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Butterworth

Fr Raymond Raj has been appointed as the Administrator for the Parish of Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Butterworth, for a

period of four (4) months from August 1 to November 30, 2023 in the absence of parish priest, Fr Dominic Santhiyagu who will be away on sabbatical leave.

7. The Bishops of Malaysia pledge to make their dioceses ecological

At the recent Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia, Singapore & Brunei, all bishops signed a declaration to affirm our pledge for our dioceses to be ecological dioceses in perpetuity. This initiative is a work in progress as every diocese takes concrete steps in responding to the call of Pope Francis' letter on *Care of Our Common Home – Laudato Si'.*

8. Ordination to the Order of Deacons — Seminarian George Vaithynathan

Brother George Vaithynathan will be called to the Order of Deacons on August 17 at Church of the Sacred Heart, Kampar. I invite you to pray with him and for him as he prepares for his ordination to the Order of Diaconate.

9. Penang Diocesan Family Life Ministry

We thank Martin and Rose Kang for their commitment and contributions towards the Penang Diocesan Family Life Ministry as Head of the ministry. They were released of their responsibilities from August 1. We wish them the very best in their continued mission for the Lord as He reveals His plan

and will for their lives. The new Head of Penang Diocesan Family Life Ministry will be determined and notified once available.

10. Singapore-Peninsular Malaysia Chinese Apostolate Gathering

Penang Diocesan Chinese Apostolate is tasked with organising this year's four-diocesan Chinese Apostolate seminar in Taiping. This annual event will be held August 24-28 at St Louis Church, Taiping. 131 Chinese speaking participants from the Singapore Archdiocese, KL Archdiocese, Malacca Johore Diocese and Penang Diocese will be attending this year event. This year is also the 50th anniversary of four diocesan Chinese speaking Catholics coming together for formation and fellowship.

11. Golden Jubilee Celebration of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in Peninsular Malaysia

I impart my blessings and prayers for the success of this event and for the continued impact of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in Malaysia August 31 – September 2, 2023 in Kajang. I wish the participants, organisers and speakers a profound and spiritually uplifting experience, as they journey together with the theme: *Rebuild, Restore, Renew.*

Sebastian Francis
Cardinal-elect Sebastian Francis

Notifications and Updates

MJD highlights challenges in the protection of minors

JOHOR BAHRU: The Professional Standard Office (PSO) Committee of the Malacca Johore diocese organised a conference on July 22 to create awareness of the current challenges in the protection of minors within the Malacca Johore diocese (MJD).

Approximately 100 participants, including catechists, leaders and personnel involved in various ministries from the Diocese of Penang, Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur and dioceses in Sarawak attended the conference, which was held via Zoom. The speakers for the conference consisted of members of the PSO Committee.

The conference was divided into three main sessions with each taking an average of an hour and 15 minutes and, at the conclusion, participants were engaged with the speakers for a question and answer session.

The first speaker, **Edelynn Wong** is a legal practitioner and currently working in the Johor State Legal Adviser's Office handling criminal matters. She explained the laws in Malaysia that have been implemented to protect minors. Her session covered the appointment and powers of Protector under the Child Act 2001, namely, taking of evidence, temporary custody and sheltering a child in a designated home and the power to order that a child be medically examined, treated and hospitalised.

Examples were given on the meaning of physical injury and sexual abuse. Another branch of abuse commonly neglected is the emotional injury to a child which includes anxiety, depression, withdrawal and aggression under section 17(2)(b).

There is protection given for those who care and intend to make reports and accordingly, any informer of child abuse shall not incur any liability for defamation or otherwise in respect

of the giving of such information.

Duty and responsibility are imposed on members of the family or child care providers to inform the Protector of any child abuse and failing to do so can result in an offence being committed.

The areas of law covered by Edelynn were the Child Act 2001, Evidence of Child Witness Act 2007, Sexual Offences against Children Act 2017 and the Penal Code.

Speaker **Anne Vergis** is an Associate Professor, the Academic Director for Teaching and Learning of the University of Reading, Malaysia, and she is also the Head of the School of Law at the university. Her research interest is on Child Sexual Abuse, including creating awareness to managing and dealing with children.

She said that many sexual abuse cases against children were initiated with a deliberate grooming process which was manipulative and gradual, used by the perpetrators to find the appropriate opportunity to build a relationship with not only the child but his/her surroundings and environment, establishing trust and control over a child while exploiting the child's vulnerabilities to ultimately carry out the abuse. Child sexual abuse can have severe and long-lasting effects on a child's physical, emotional and psychological well-being.

Dr Fabian Dass is a psychiatrist with 11 years of experience in the field of mental health. He completed his Masters of Psychological Medicine at University Malaya (MPM) and is now a senior lecturer at Monash University, and practising as a psychiatrist at Hospital Regency, Johor Bahru. Evidence has shown that mental health disorders have increased. Illicit substance abuse has also increased, engaging in maladaptive coping strategies.



Why the PSO was established

The Professional Standard Office Malacca Johore Diocese (PSO-MJD) was established in 2017 by Bishop Bernard Paul in response to Pope Francis' growing concerns on the abuse of minors and vulnerable adults, particularly in the Church.

The Holy Father, after consultation with the Council of Cardinals in 2013, felt the need to set up an advisory body consisting of experts in the respective fields on minors and vulnerable adults, to assist him. As a result, the creation of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Adults was established in 2014. Similarly, the PSO-MJD Committee consists of a group of lay professionals who are experts in various fields — namely psychology, legal and counselling backgrounds — who will assist Bishop Bernard to oversee the development of policy, principal guidelines and procedures for a safer Church.

Dr Cindy Niap, is a psychiatrist and a senior lecturer at Monash University Malaysia. In her presentation, she educates the audience that 90 per cent of Child Sexual Abuse victims know their perpetrators, and that perpetrators can be of any age, gender, race, religious beliefs, educational level and socioeconomic status. A difference is drawn between situational and paedophilic offenders, in terms of motivations, pattern of abuse and treatment response. Prevention strategies are summarised at organisational and individual levels.

Christopher Kushi is legally trained and a Legal Advisor to the Minor Basilica of St Anne and a Civil Law Associate in the Tribunal — Penang Office. His previous postings include Royal Malaysian Police Force (PDRM), Malaysian Judiciary, Attorney General's Chambers and Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

He spoke on the standard operating procedure on complaints and reports. All concerns and complaints of child abuse and neglect shall be made to the PSO-MJD. This can be done verbally, by phone calls, mails, emails, or social media apps. The PSO-MJD will do the necessary enquiries and inform the complainant and the Bishop of Malacca Johore Diocese of the next course of action promptly. Also

explained was the mandatory reporting of any allegations of child sexual abuse. If the complainant on advice does not inform the police, the PSO-MJD will do the reporting to the authorities in the 'best interest of the child'. The church will also provide pastoral and spiritual support to all concerned as befitting a loving church. Other reporting methods include calling the *Talian Kasih Hotline* 15999, bringing child victims to the One Stop Crisis Centres (OSCC) at hospitals, informing the protection officer at the nearest Social Welfare Department or making a police report.

Deacon Anthony Chua is currently the bishop's delegate for the PSO-MJD. A legal practitioner since 1992 primarily on civil litigation and chairperson of the Human Rights Melaka Bar Committee in 2014, he also sits on the Bar Disciplinary Committee hearing cases on ethical and disciplinary issues concerning lawyers. He spoke on the chronological events of Pope Francis setting up the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Adults.

The PSO-MJD has submitted its second draft on the Child Protection Manual to the Pontifical Commission in November 2019 and is still awaiting its approval.



The speakers for the conference consisted of members of the PSO committee.

The ups and downs of Catholic parenting

KUALA LUMPUR: The Church of the Risen Christ's parents of catechism students were blessed to have Michael Xavier spending time engaging with them in a session about Christian Parenting. Also present were his wife Anuja and their daughters Desiree and Delfina.

It was an eye-opener for the 40 parents from this parish. He began with a survey to identify the contemporary challenges faced by Christian parents. The survey highlighted several prominent issues including communication, the influence of social media and how to get children interested in their faith without feeling obligated.

Michael focused on six key themes such as *God has a purpose for you as a couple; the evil one has plotted a plan to derail God's purpose; bringing up your children with Christ-centred values; your unity as a couple in Christ is the bedrock of your children's faith; your children*

follow you rather than what you say; do your children experience God's love and deeds; forgiveness and repentance open doors of reconciliation.

Some of the issues discussed were to carry your cross as Jesus did and perhaps one day see your children give testimony about their faith. The parents were led to read scripture-relevant passages for this talk. He also talked about the devil moving among us and the importance of being vigilant. "We are all broken people and we find out strength in Christ," said Michael.

He also emphasised that the role of parenting is a joint responsibility for mother and father, rather than the sole responsibility of one parent. Both parents should decide to serve the Lord as a united team.

The father of two posed some serious questions to the parents including: Do you walk the

talk? Do you commit to coming to church as a family? Do you immerse yourself in the Word of God daily and spend time in prayer daily? Are you rooted in the Word of God?

He challenged the parents to commit to rooting themselves in the Word of God for the next seven days and assured them that they would see improvements in their family relationships.

Most parishioners come to church abiding by tradition but don't understand the importance of Mass as a sacrifice.

In conclusion, Michael reminded the attendees that grandparents also play an important role in the Christian upbringing through catechising the children their way. — **By Britto Joseph**



Michael Xavier sharing about Christian parenting at the Church of the Risen Christ.

Pilgrims climb up 'the Reek' to promote vocations in Ireland

IRELAND: A number of bishops joined thousands of pilgrims from across Ireland in the annual Reek Sunday pilgrimage climb of Croagh Patrick as part of the Irish Church's drive for vocations to the priesthood.

Archbishop Eamon Martin, Primate of All Ireland, climbed about a half-mile to the summit on July 30 to celebrate Mass in the small oratory at the top of Ireland's holy mountain, where St Patrick is reputed to have spent 40 days in the fifth century. Bishop Fintan Monahan of Killaloe diocese and Bishop Alphonsus Cullinan of Waterford & Lismore also took part in the pilgrim climb.

Archbishop Martin, who as Archbishop of Armagh is successor to St Patrick, explained: "We are trying to get the message out this year that priesthood is a very much important vocation for the Church. Our numbers in the priesthood are dwindling but we are hopeful that the Lord is still calling people."

The Irish Church is grappling with a shortage of priests and a lack of vocations. Only a handful of ordinations will take place this year, with most of the 26 dioceses seeing no ordina-



Pilgrims climb Croagh Patrick in Co Mayo for Reek Sunday

tions at all.

Archbishop Francis Duffy of Tuam, in whose diocese Croagh Patrick lies, said, "I think there is now a greater awareness of the shortage of priests."

"This 'Year of Vocation' is timely, and I think it will bear fruit. We had a vocations year about 15 years ago and that resulted in an increase in the number of people answering the call. It is

important to raise awareness. There are young men who are ready to answer that call. People who are generous, who are thoughtful, and who are willing to take the risk for Christ."

He acknowledged that it was important to encourage men but they also had to be realistic about the situation.

In Tuam diocese, Archbishop Duffy explained, "no matter what parish I go to I hear

people talking in a positive way about their priests; it is important for them to have a priest."

However, due to the shortage of clergy, not all parishes will have a priest living in their parish in the future. Instead, they will rely on the assistance and pastoral care of a neighbouring priest, the archbishop said. "This is already happening," he said, acknowledging that some people are "disappointed and sad about this."

The changing situation has meant that lay people are now talking about training in order to do a greater amount of administration and pastoral work in the diocese, such as leading prayer services.

"It is something that we will be examining through the synodal process. I think it is going to be a gradual transition to having more and more parishioners directly involved in pastoral care."

Although lay-led funerals and marriages have not yet commenced in the diocese, they will come eventually, he said. "I think it is going to be a gradual movement but a very important one." — ucanews.com

Catholic men have 'a duty to protect families'

FLORIDA: Addressing more than 2,000 Knights of Columbus, August 1, Supreme Knight Patrick Kelly (*pic*) urged the assembled to stand strong as men of faith amid new challenges facing the Catholic Church today.

In his speech to Knights, along with several cardinals, bishops, priests, and religious at the 141st Supreme Convention at Orlando World Centre Marriott in Orlando, Florida, Kelly emphasised the need for Catholic men to continue standing for the faith and for the weak and vulnerable.

In the face of what he called "new anti-Catholic bigotry," Kelly said that Catholic men "have a duty to protect families," most especially the widowed and orphaned.

Recalling the Knights' principles of "first in faith and charity," Kelly highlighted the order's efforts in response to post-Dobbs attacks on unborn life, support for those affected by the war in Ukraine, and response to a growing "epidemic of loneliness" that has particularly impacted young men in America.

Kelly pointed out a 2023 study from the US Surgeon General reported "that we are living through an epidemic of loneliness and isolation."



"I submit that the Knights of Columbus offers a cure," Kelly said. "In this time of loneliness, we offer fraternity. In this era of isolation, we extend the hand of friendship. And in a world that offers apathy and anger, we invite men to lives of meaning and mission."

"In this age of mediocrity, the Knights of Columbus invites men to greatness: to sacrifice themselves for the good of others; to commit to a higher call with a band of brothers; and to stand strong in the breach, side by side, instead of being swept away by the culture, one at a time," he said.

While Catholics have taken criticism for their work upholding religious freedom and the sanctity of life, Kelly urged the Knights to never back down from defending the truth of the Catholic faith.

"There is nothing hateful about the sanctity of marriage, the reality of biological sex, or the humanity of the unborn child," he said. "And the Knights of Columbus will never apologise for defending the truth."

"We stand for the truth because it's right — even when it leads to ridicule and scorn," Kelly said. — **By Peter Pinedo, CNA**



Delegates to the 141st Supreme Convention, along with family members and special guests, listen to the supreme knight's annual report during the opening business session Aug 1, 2023. (Knights of Columbus Photo/Tamino Petelinšek)

US awards Indian lawyer for empowering minorities

NEW DELHI: Jose Abraham, a lawyer of the Supreme Court of India, has been awarded by the State Department of the United States of America for his remarkable work in his field.

The US department announced the International Visitor Leadership Programme (IVLP) Impact Award on July 29 recognising Abraham's efforts to empower minorities in India. The award carries US\$5,000 (RM22,782.50).

Reacting to the news, Abraham said the award "is indeed a great honour and motivation" for him as it is from the US government. "I will continue with one of my missions related to empowerment of minority communities in India legally," he said.

Abraham, who is the author of six books, released a book on *Minority Empowerment Law* along with Justice Narendra Kumar, this year.

As a lawyer, Abraham has represented more than 7,000 educational institutions in India — a record — to get their minority status certificate that protects them under Article 30(1) of the Constitution of India which is a record.

The IVLP is the US Department of State's premier professional exchange programme. Through short-term visits to the United States,



current and emerging foreign leaders in a variety of fields experience America first-hand and cultivate lasting relationships with their American counterparts.

Professional meetings reflect the participants' professional interests and support the foreign policy goals of the United States, a statement says.

Abraham is an Advocate-on-Record in the Supreme Court of India, a lawyer entitled to act as well as to plead for a party in the country's apex court.

He is the founding president of Pravasi Legal Cell, an NGO working to provide pro-bono (without charge) legal aid to the weaker sections from the migrant community. He also serves as chairman for Paideia Institute for Training and Research in Social Sciences, New Delhi and is a consultant and legal advisor to many NGOs and educational institutions.

Abraham has postgraduate degrees in both Law and Political Science and currently works on Indian migration laws as part of his doctoral research. — **By Jose Kavi, Matters India**

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DAYS IN THE DIOCESES IN PORTUGAL

Here are some sharings of the Days in the Diocese held prior to the actual World Youth Day celebration.

On our first night in Lisbon, we stayed at a hotel near the airport. The next day, we departed for the Church of Our Lady of Fatima by coach. At the cathedral, we saw the tombs of Sts Lucia, Jacinta and Francisco. I was deeply touched to enter the cathedral, I felt the overwhelming presence of the Holy Spirit, Our Lady and the three saints. It was a feeling I cannot describe. The feeling remained as I prayed a decade of the Rosary. I felt a wholeness within me. I was grateful to be in Fatima and I truly believe God made it possible for me and the other pilgrims.

We were under the care of the Church of St Vincente in Irivo. The warm hospitality of the Scouts greeted us upon our arrival.

On the first day here, we settled into our accommodation and, after a briefing, shared dinner with our foster families. We were supposed to stay with foster families, but due to a shortage of available homes, we ended up residing in an old folks' activities building. However, our foster families took great care of us, preparing delicious meals and arranging transportation for our excursions.

Every evening, dinner was served at different locations, adding a nice

touch to our experience. We visited historical places like Rota do Romanico, a Monzinho, and Irivo itself. During the excursions, we were accompanied by volunteers who were scouts aged between 16 and 18 years old.

We generally communicated in English but we picked up a few simple Portuguese words like *Ola* (Hello), *Obragada* (Thank you), *Bon Dia* (Good Morning), and *Bon Noite* (Good Night). We were fortunate to have Miguel and Alphonso as translators to assist us. There was a Malaysian in our group who spoke Portuguese, and he helped with translations too. We also used Google Translate, language converter apps, and even resorted to body language when needed.

Thus far, what we learnt:

1. Punctuality is of the essence.
2. For significant celebrations, they gather around long tables and enjoy a meal.
3. We learnt how they prepare some local dishes like rice, dessert and pastries.
4. Most residents in Irivo are farmers as the area is located in the countryside, around 10-30 mins away from the town centre.



The good, the bad and the wonderful

We attended our first Mass on the Feast of St James the Greater in Braga, at the Cathedral of Braga's chapel. According to our guide, in Coimbra, people study; in Porto, people work; in Braga, people pray; and in Lisbon, people enjoy.

We also visited the Chapel of Souls of Saint Catherine or the Chapel of "Lost Souls" as well as the Camino de Fe or the Path of Faith where pilgrims have to pass through this really narrow passage.

We attended Mass in Igreja de Santo Antonio dos Congregados or

St Anthony of the two congregations. The title is perhaps a referral to the fact that St Anthony joined the Order of St Augustine and later the Order of Friars Minor.

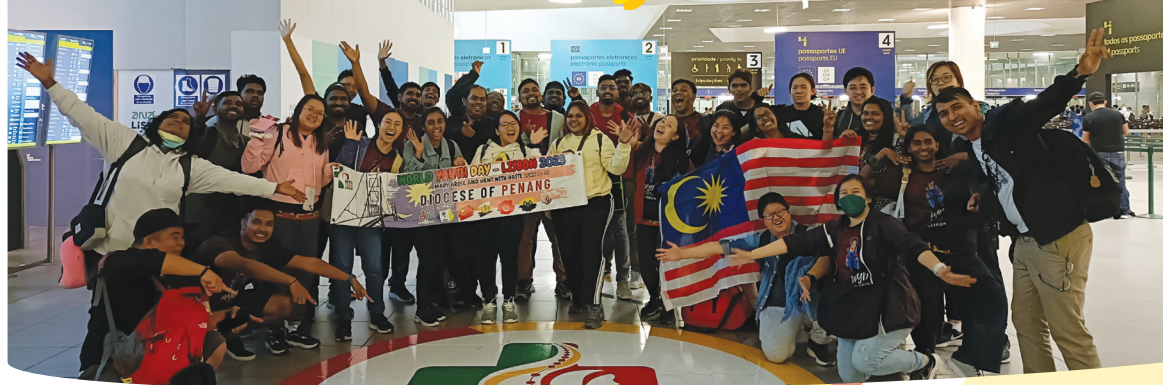
We also visited the mayor's office at the municipal Town Hall and joined other pilgrims in painting a mural in Tarouca.

On July 30, there was a youth festival where we met delegates from other parts of the world who have made the Diocese of Lamego their home in the last couple of days.

We celebrated our last Mass in



Proud to be Malaysian



We were also privileged to witness their traditional dance.

On our second day, we were taken on a tour of their town, Penafiel.

On the morning of the third day, we met with the pilgrims from Poland and did a Zumba session together. Then we went for Mass which was celebrated by the Bishop of Penafiel, with several local priests concelebrating. Fr Michel Dass from the the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur, read the day's Gospel in Bahasa Malaysia and someone from the Malaysian delegation read the Doa Umat in English.

Later, we were taught how to use our WYD pilgrims' card for the trains. We set out to visit the town

of Porto, where Miguel encouraged us to explore the town on our own. Some of us went alone while others in pairs, or groups of five. We met at the train station at 7.00pm and returned to Irivo for dinner with the foster families at the front of St Vincente's. After dinner, we went into the church, where parish priest Fr Albino was on hand to welcome us.

Mass the next morning was celebrated by Fr Michel Dass, after which we continued to explore Porto. While visiting churches around the town, we met pilgrims from other countries. These were priceless moments. We bumped into groups and joined them in singing and dancing. It was so nice to share the youthful

spirit with people from other countries.

Fr Michel guided us to realise that seeing their burning spirit made us more confident, and gave us the courage to create a bond and connect through our faith in Jesus. We could not understand each other's languages, but when it came to Jesus and Mother Mary, we became one. We were proud to be part of the Malaysian Catholic Youth, especially when they recognised our flag. We could see the joy, spirit, love and faith in their eyes. It was a beautiful moment for us. We also met lots of young priests and religious and saw Christ through them. — *Alviannie Aloysius, Diocese of Penang*

Seeing Christ in their kindness

This is my second time attending DID + WYD. The first was in Poland in 2016. The experience here in Portugal is as amazing as in Poland. Together with about 20 Malaysians, we were hosted by the parish of Fonte Arcada and Lagares. We were considered to be extremely lucky as we were told that there weren't enough foster families to accommodate all the pilgrims. The hosts welcomed us with great hospitality and kindness.

Throughout the whole week, we spent the days with the youth from Fonte Arcada with prayers, songs and laughter while exploring the Porto region. Then in the evening, we spent time with our respective host family.

We were also lucky to experience the celebration of the feast of San Tiago (St James) on 25 July, the patron saint of Fonte Arcada, and participate in the traditional Mastro Festival held on this day when the

locals cut down a big tree and carry the log to the top of the hill.

All in all, this DID has been a memorable week for all of us with the beautiful memories we made and the connections we forged with the people here. We could truly see Christ in their kindness and sincerity and this, for me, has to be the most beautiful way of showing the world what we children of God are about. — *Louis Chan Kit How, Malacca Johore Diocese*



"multi-use pavilion of Odivelas", after 8.00pm. The journey was long from Lamego because the bus could not drop us where we were supposed to go and of course the pavements are designed to destroy our trolley bags. We settled in by 9 plus and then went looking for dinner.

Aug 2 was tough. A good way to describe this challenge is that Lisbon was thrilled to welcome us but unready to receive the multitudes. It is almost like they do not believe in the eagerness of the youth to absorb the teachings of the Church. We were turned away from the Theology of the Body session by Christopher West because the hall could not accommodate the great numbers who wanted to know how to navigate

these confusing times especially with regard to the body, sexuality, gender and chastity.

Shutting down the metro was most unhelpful. The geography of Lisbon is punishing that even our intrepid pilgrims found it hard.

However, we consoled ourselves with a visit to the Cathedral of Saint Mary Major, praying before the baptistry where St Anthony was baptised and his bone relic is kept. We also managed to visit the Church of St Anthony just adjacent to the Cathedral. The welcoming was our wrap up. It was phenomenal. — *Fr Simon Yong SJ*

Fr Simon was with his parish youth from the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Johor Bahru.

Ten years ago, Pope Francis shook up the Church

When Pope Francis made the first foreign trip of his papacy, to Rio de Janeiro for World Youth Day (WYD) in 2013, he urged young people to make a “mess” in their local churches, to shake things up even if it ruffled the feathers of their bishops.

As he embarked recently on another edition of WYD, in Lisbon, Portugal, Francis has in many ways taken his own advice to heart. After 10 years as Pope, Francis is accelerating his reform agenda and making revolutionary changes in personnel and policy that are definitely shaking things up.

Unencumbered by the shadow of Pope Benedict XVI who died seven months ago, and despite recovering from a second intestinal surgery in as many years, the 86-year-old Francis is opening a frenetic second half of the year with his Portugal visit. He seems aware that he has a limited sweet spot of time to solidify the changes he believes are necessary for the 21st century Church, and is looking to the next generation of faithful and leaders to execute them.

“The sense I get is that this is the consolidation phase of the pontificate,” said papal biographer, Austen Ivereigh. “He’s laying the basis now, laying the ground, for the future.”

And no better place to put it on display than at a WYD. The international rally, which St John Paul II launched in 1986 to galvanise young Catholics in their faith, drew close to one million people for the first post-pandemic event of its kind. Francis’ perennial social justice concerns about climate change, social inequality and fraternity, as well as Russia’s war in Ukraine, are expected to be major themes.

Beyond Portugal, though, Francis’ multi-fold strategy for laying the groundwork for the future is coming together and will hit significant marks in the coming months.

His global canvassing of rank-and-file Catholics about their vision for the future comes to fruition this October with a big synod at the Vatican. The meeting is intended to give direction on such hot-button issues as the place of LGBTQ+ Catholics and women in the Church, and for the first time will feature women and young people voting on pro-

Now he’s cementing his legacy



Pope Francis waves to people from his popemobile along the Copacabana beachfront as he arrives for the Stations of the Cross procession in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Friday, July 26, 2013.

posals alongside bishops.

“I really think that for Pope Francis, he felt that ‘OK, now it’s mature’ and it would be good really to involve all the members, all the people in the synod as members” with the right to vote, said Sr Nathalie Becquart, who is one of the key synod organisers.

To then implement the vision that emerges from the synod, Francis has been naming a slew of unusually young bishops for key archdioceses — in his native Buenos Aires, Madrid and Brussels, among others. At the same time, he’s elevated several cardinals in their 50s — and in some cases their 40s — including the auxiliary bishop of Lisbon who organised the recent WYD.

Putting such young clerics in such important positions ensures a generation’s worth of likeminded leadership in the Vatican and archdioceses around the world. While not all are cookie-cutter proteges of Francis, many are seen as similarly pastorally minded and thus more game to implement his reforms, especially as the older generation of bishops and cardinals dies out.

After Francis is gone, the youngest of these new cardinals will have some three decades’ worth of local leadership and conclave votes to select future popes, suggesting a generational and ideological shift in the Church leadership is very much underway.

Francis’ most important young “legacy” appointment was that of the Vatican’s new doctrinal czar, Argentine Cardinal-elect Victor Manuel Fernandez, 61. Francis’ theological ghostwriter ran into Vatican problems in the past over questions about his doctrinal orthodoxy, and his appointment sent shockwaves through the conservative and traditionalist wings of the Church.

Fernandez sees his appointment as part of Francis’ longer-term agenda. “He is proposing a more inclusive Church, more respectful of different ways of living, even of thinking,” Fernandez said in an interview.

Portuguese Cardinal-elect Americo Aguiar, who was in charge of WYD, is another young churchman who also understands his appointment as part of a generational turning point for the Catholic hierarchy.

At age 49 he will become the second-youngest member of the College of Cardinals when he is installed Sept 30. He is just six months older than the current youngest cardinal, whom Francis elevated this time last year: Cardinal Giorgio Marengo, head of the Church in Mongolia, where Francis will travel to at the end of August.

“My reading of it is that this has to do with young people, it has to do with youth, it has to do with Portugal, it has to do with WYD, it has to do with all of that,” Aguiar said in an interview. “I think that his objective and his underlining was exactly to send a signal to the young people, to every young person who is preparing for the day, whether in Portugal or in the world, to feel identified with this decision.”

Francis said as much in his monthly prayer intentions for August, this time dedicated to the Lisbon event.

“In Lisbon, I would like to see a seed for the world’s future,” Francis said. “A world where love is at the centre, where we can sense that we are sisters and brothers.”

His wish in many ways echoed his words at the 2013 WYD in Rio, which now seem prescient in outlining many of the key pastoral messages Francis has emphasised over the past decade. Delivering a spontaneous, off-the-cuff exhortation to a gathering of Argentine pilgrims that was organised at the last minute, Francis urged the young to get out into the streets, spread their faith and “make a mess.”

“I want to see the Church get closer to the people,” Francis said then, speaking in his native Spanish. “I want to get rid of clericalism, the mundane, this closing ourselves off within ourselves, in our parishes, schools or structures.”

Realising the radical nature of his message, Francis apologised to the bishops for what was about to come, even though in the 10 years since, he has only gone further than anyone could have imagined at the time.

“The true reform of the Church, you know, is not a revolution bringing something completely from outside,” said Becquart, the French nun, as she reflected on Francis’ agenda. “It’s a path of change that is a way to unfold tradition, but in a very dynamic way.”

— *America*

World Youth Days test the limits of ageing popes

At a press conference just hours after Pope Francis underwent a surprise hernia operation in June, an immediate concern was whether the 86-year-old would be cleared to travel to Portugal in August for World Youth Day (WYD).

When Francis landed in Lisbon on August 2 for the 42nd international trip of his decade long papacy and for his fourth WYD, he demonstrated that, despite serious health setbacks over the last year, he intended to press ahead with his agenda.

But similar to his two most recent predecessors, he will also inevitably have to confront the reality that WYDs — major gatherings of Catholic young people from around the globe every few years — test the limits of aging pontiffs.

In 2002, when a frail Pope John Paul II landed at Toronto’s Pearson airport for WYD there, he stunned onlookers and his handlers alike by walking down the steps of the plane himself. In the months leading up to the trip, there was much speculation over whether the Pope, who had Parkinson’s disease, would

even be able to make the trip.

The ailing pontiff acknowledged that he was “old” when speaking to young people, but the roar of their chants of “JP II, we love you” managed to reinvigorate the 82-year-old Pope and WYD founder.

After John Paul’s arrival in Canada, he spent four days resting on nearby Strawberry Island before officially arriving to take part in WYD festivities — a strategy repeated by an 81-year-old Pope Benedict XVI when he arrived in Australia for Sydney’s WYD in 2008.

Despite their advanced ages and various physical limitations, both popes managed to rise to the occasion, using their WYD appearances not only to energise a new generation of Catholics, but also to rejuvenate themselves.

In Toronto in 2002, John Paul — who at that point in his papacy struggled with speech — managed to deliver the speeches himself, despite plans to have an aide deliver them on the Pope’s behalf.

At Madrid’s 2011 WYD, the then-84-year-old Benedict refused to leave the stage — and the young people present — when a thunder-

storm knocked out the electricity and temporarily halted the event. His spokesman, Jesuit Fr Federico Lombardi, would later describe that moment as a metaphor for Benedict’s entire pontificate.

But WYD also loomed large in Benedict’s decision and timing to resign the papacy, knowing that he was physically unable to continue travelling and wanting a new pope to be in place in order to make it to the 2013 WYD in Rio de Janeiro.

At 86, Francis is now the oldest pope to ever preside over a WYD celebration. Despite his recent surgery and struggles with mobility, his schedule for Lisbon was jam-packed with more events than his past trips over the last year — including a total of 11 speeches over five days and a trip to the country’s popular Marian shrine of Fátima.

Francis has repeatedly said that getting out of the Vatican is what gives him life, and with plans to travel to Mongolia at the end of August and to Marseilles, France, at the end of September, it’s clear the Pope doesn’t want to stop travelling.

But since returning to the Vatican following his surgery, he has also shown signs that he’s in a hurry. At the beginning of July, he appointed his long-time theological adviser, Archbishop Víctor Manuel Fernández, as the new head of the Vatican’s doctrinal office, a move meant to shore up his curial reforms with a renewed emphasis on pastoral theology.

A week later, he made the surprise announcement that he would create 21 new cardinals in September, further cementing his imprint on the College of Cardinals. And all of this will take place on the eve of the closely watched October Synod of Bishops, which is likely to also be another legacy defining moment for his pontificate.

While the charismatic Francis was undoubtedly in his element in Lisbon as he fed off the energy of the young people there, it’s not hard to imagine that in the back of his mind he might have also been wondering whether he would be present at the next WYD — and what all he might want to accomplish before then. — *By Christopher White, NCR*

The identity of catechesis

In my first article, I examined the origin and development of the term “catechesis”. In this article, I will discuss the identity of catechesis, that is, what is catechesis?

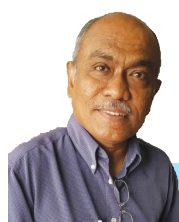
God’s revelation as the starting point of catechesis

The starting point for understanding the identity of catechesis is the Revelation of God. God revealed Himself in order to save humanity. God’s revelation reached its perfect and definitive fulfilment in the Person of Jesus Christ. During His time on earth, Jesus revealed God’s plan of salvation through His life, words and works. He sent the Holy Spirit on the Apostles, and before His Ascension, Jesus gave them a mandate: “Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commandments I gave you” (Mat. 28: 19 – 20).

Catechesis as a stage in the Church’s mission

Jesus’ mandate consists a series of closely related stages: “Go” (mission), “make disciples” (evangelisation), “baptise” (initiation) and “teach” (catechesis). It is a mandate to go and welcome, proclaim and educate, call and incorporate into the Church. Mission, evangelisation, initiation and catechesis are intertwined. Together, they form different stages of the mandate of Jesus to the entire Church.

Catechesis receives from the other stages a missionary dynamism which enriches it and defines its own identity. Without them, the true nature of catechesis cannot be fully understood nor appreciated. According to the *Directory for Catechesis*, “Catechesis is an action of the Church arising from the missionary mandate of Jesus and aimed at making the proclamation of His passion, death and resurrection continually resound in the heart of every person, so that his or her life may be transformed” (n. 55). Therefore, since catechesis is a stage in the Church’s evangelising mission, every catechetical activity is missionary in nature.



ECHOING THE FAITH

Dr Steven Selvaraju

Forms of catechesis

Catechesis may be defined as “an education of children, young people and adults in the faith, which includes especially the teaching of Christian doctrine imparted in an organic and systematic way, with the view of initiating hearers into the fullness of Christian life” (*Catechesi Tradendae*, n. 18). It takes various forms, such as family catechesis, basic catechesis, ongoing catechesis, situational catechesis and initiatory catechesis.

Family catechesis

The family is the place where the Gospel is first transmitted, the sense of God awakened, the first prayers are taught, moral conscience and Christian values are formed and a sense of Christian love is fostered. In most instances, family catechesis is more witnessed to than taught, more situational than systematic, more on-going and daily than structured into periods. This is generally known as “initial catechesis”. For it is in the home that children have their initial or first experience of the divine, undergo initial conversion to Christ and grow in the initial understanding of the Catholic faith. Here, parents and guardians play an important role.

Basic catechesis

This represents the type of catechesis where an adult (catechist) instructs or teaches a group of children or teenagers, usually by using a textbook (catechism). The focus here is the handing on of the basic truths of the Catholic faith and the imparting of basic Christian values in a holistic and systematic way in accordance to the ages of the learners. The learner is also prepared to receive the Sacraments of First Holy Communion, Penance and Confirmation. This form of catechesis



sis presupposes that learners have received adequate catechesis at home. Without proper family catechesis, the task of providing catechesis to children and teenagers in the parish may be “weakened”. Basic catechesis by itself is insufficient for one to deepen his or her faith. It has to be followed up with ongoing catechesis.

Ongoing or continuing catechesis

Ongoing or continuing catechesis presupposes family and basic catechesis. It is aimed especially at the adult members in the Church. In fact, adult catechesis is considered the principal form of catechesis in the Church because it is addressed to persons who have the greatest responsibility and the capacity to live the Christian message in its fully developed form (*Adult Catechesis in the Christian Community*, n. 4). Ongoing catechesis includes the study of the scriptures, liturgical catechesis, the social teaching of the Church, spiritual formation, theological instruction and others.

Situational or occasional catechesis

Situational or occasional catechesis refers to imparting of the faith to children, teenagers and adults in relation to specific needs and circumstances or groups in the Church. Marriage preparation, youth programmes, catechesis on family life and human sexuality, social issues and the safeguarding of the environment, and for parish groups and ministries, basic ecclesial communities and associations in the Church are examples of situational catechesis.

These seek to help Catholics understand and grow in their faith at the personal, marriage, family, ecclesial or social life.

Initiatory catechesis

An example of initiatory catechesis is that which occurs in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). Its focus is to help adults wishing to become Catholics to be initiated into the Church through the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist. This form of catechesis is closely linked to liturgical celebrations and the involvement of the Christian community which is called to surround and assist “candidates and catechumens during the initiation process, from the precatechumenate to the catechumenate, to the period of mystagogy” (*General Directory for Catechesis*, n. 256).

Conclusion

Since catechesis is a stage in the evangelising mission of the entire Church, all the baptised, especially adult members, are both agents and recipients of catechesis. In understanding the true identity of catechesis, we will become aware that the responsibility for catechesis falls on the whole Christian community. The Church reminds that we are called to catechise and to receive catechesis so that together, we may continually grow and mature in our faith and also be able to help others to do so.

Below is a simple infographic I prepared to help readers capture the essence of my article.

The Identity of Catechesis (What is Catechesis?)

The starting point for understanding the identity of catechesis is the Revelation of God. God revealed Himself in order to save humanity. God’s revelation reached its perfect and final fulfilment in the Person of Jesus Christ.

I have come so that they may live and have it to the full (Jn 10: 10)

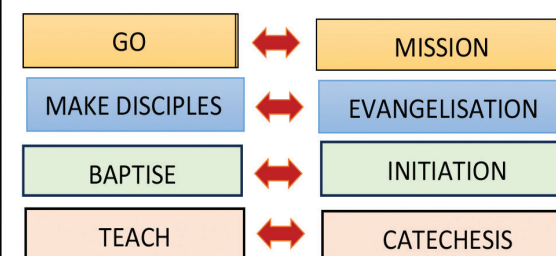


Before his Ascension, Jesus gave the Apostles a mandate:



“Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commandments I gave you” (Mat. 28: 19–20).

Jesus’ mandate consists a series of closely related stages:



Together, they give catechesis a missionary dynamism and its identity.

Catechesis is at the service of the Church’s evangelising mission. It means every catechetical activity is missionary in nature.

So, what is catechesis?



It is ... “an education of **children, young people and adults** in the faith, which includes especially the teaching of Christian doctrine imparted, in an organic and systematic way, with the view of initiating hearers into the fullness of Christian life” (*Catechesi Tradendae*, 18).

In the Church, catechesis takes various forms:

Form of catechesis	Aim
Family	Initiating faith
Basic	Deepening faith
Ongoing	Maturing faith
Situational	Deepening faith in certain areas
Initiatory (RCIA)	Initiating adults into Christian life and community

Each form is essential and complementary. Without any of them, the ministry of catechesis may be “weakened”.

All the baptised, especially adult members, are both agents and recipients of catechesis. We are called to catechise and to receive catechesis. We are responsible for the ministry of catechesis in the Church.



Dr. Steven Selvaraju 08/23

Bringing faith into action

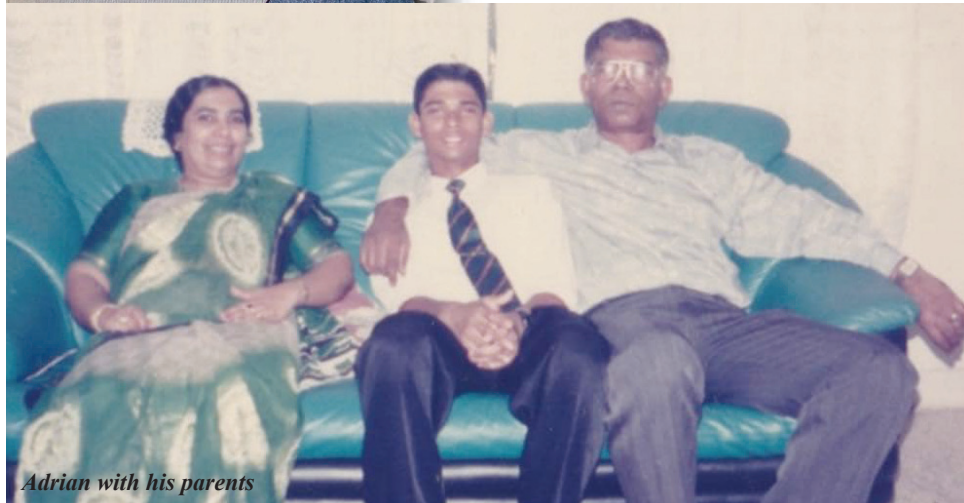
By Gwen Manickam



From a tender age, Adrian Pereira has been deeply immersed in youth ministries and dedicated to championing social justice causes. His unwavering commitment to these endeavours can be traced back to his upbringing in a family of social activists who served the Malacca Johore diocese for numerous years. Hailing from the plantation town of Kota Tinggi, Adrian's mother, Shirley May Gomez in particular, played a pivotal role in igniting his passion for helping those less fortunate. Together with the Church of St Elizabeth, they tirelessly distributed essential groceries to underprivileged families residing in the plantations.

However, Shirley was not his sole source of inspiration. His late father, Rene Joseph Joachim Pereira, also played a significant role in nurturing his compassionate spirit and consistently reminded him to "Do the right thing." This invaluable guidance from his father instilled in Adrian a strong moral compass, compelling him to actively seek justice and fairness in the world around him.

After observing the persisting poverty among the families they had been assisting, Adrian grew curious and questioned his mother, "Why are they still poor?" In response, Shirley advised him about the importance of not just providing immediate aid but also em-



Adrian with his parents

North-South Initiative

In 2011, Adrian and Anne Beatrice Yacob founded a civil society organisation known as the North-South Initiative (NSI) with a GBP2,000 grant from the British Embassy to train young people from Patani on media advocacy.

Four years later, NSI, a Youth-Adult Partnership (YAP) initiative dedicated to advancing sustainable development within Malaysia and other developing nations, evolved into a full-fledged non-government organisation (NGO). Its primary mission is to empower marginalised communities like the Indigenous peoples, minority students, youths residing in conflict zones, migrant workers, refugees, small-scale farmers, and other disenfranchised minorities. They also prioritise healthcare and education access, environmental sustainability, and economic development. To achieve this, they foster partnerships among businesses, governments, and civil society organisations, to generate innovative solutions for vulnerable communities facing sustainable development challenges.

NSI also conducts capacity-building programmes to help enhance the skills and knowledge of organisations and individuals, enabling them to address these challenges effectively. Their overarching vision is to establish a network of dedicated individuals and organisations committed to sustainable development within Malaysia and internationally.

In the last two years, the organisation has grown to 23 staff. However, in proportion to the two to three million migrants in the country, there are not enough NGOs with the competence to deal with some of the complex issues, said Adrian.

"We have built two different competencies in our organisation; one team works with supply chains to help reduce labour abuse, and the other team does community organising where we help migrants and refugees gain a better understanding of labour and security laws.

NSI provides various services, including Forced Labour Consultancy/Auditing Assessment, Migrant Emergencies, Labour Cases and Human Trafficking, Community Development, CBT Testing - Migrant Health, and Research. The organisation won two cases against large conglomerates, recovering unpaid wages totalling up to RM12 million and another case involving RM1.2 million.

In its infancy, most of NSI's funding came from Adrian's parents. Now the organisation receives monetary support from bodies under the United Nations arm and private foundations, which requires transparency and submission of meticulous reports.

"NSI has also started a shelter for male migrant workers involved in labour disputes or those injured in a workplace accident and need a place to recuperate. Occasionally we have Malaysians seeking refuge too. People



powering individuals to break free from the cycle of poverty. She taught him about the need to teach them how to fish, acknowledging that true transformation requires time and support.

"I still couldn't shake the feeling that something was inherently flawed within the system," said Adrian.

As the years passed, he witnessed Shirley's dedication as she journeyed alongside many families, some for as long as four decades. Her efforts went beyond material assistance, as she played a pivotal role in helping plantation workers' children gain access to basic education, and even supporting their aspirations for higher education, although not all succeeded and many fell through the cracks.

Adrian also saw his mother locking horns with parishioners who were selective about only helping Christians. She insisted that help should be extended to all those in need, regardless of their religious background. This early exposure left a lasting impression on the young boy, instilling in him the belief that compassionate outreach extends beyond the boundaries of any specific religious circle, presenting an opportunity for evangelisation through acts of selfless service.

"God has blessed my family, and in return, we give back to society," said the forty-something-year-old.

During his pursuit of an engineering degree,

Adrian was actively involved in the Catholic Student Society on campus where he learnt about Catholic social teachings and the different encyclicals released by the various popes.

"I hope the Catholic Student Society on the various campuses in the country remain vigilant in teaching the young about activism with a social justice agenda so they can become agents of change in Church and society, to advocate for the needs of the marginalised and bring their faith into action."

In 2007, after a stint at Pusat Komus, Adrian embarked on a new professional journey as the Asia Pacific Coordinator for the International Movement of Catholic Students (IMCS), a global organisation. Based in Manila for three years, this experience was a transformative chapter in Adrian's life. It allowed him to witness first-hand how the Catholic faith and global issues intersected, broadening his perspective and honing his skills in managing these dynamics.

Although Adrian deviated from his initial path as an engineer, society's perception of his education being wasted did not deter him from answering his calling to be part of the human rights movement. He uses the knowledge and skills acquired to help develop solutions and systems. He also advises supply chain companies on ethical practices, and how to avoid engaging in forced labour and other exploitative practices.



Adrian Pereira and Anne Beatrice, with YM Tengku Aslahuddin Ja'afar at NSIs World AIDS day celebrations to launch the ResQ Team.

from the migrant community are managing the place."

NSI advises the governments on the different policies needed such as labour and anti-trafficking.

In line with the Holy Father's vision of social justice, Adrian and NSI appeal to fellow Catholics and the wider community to be more empathetic towards migrants and refugees. NSI is also actively seeking homes to convert into shelters to accommodate migrants in need.

Adrian's early experiences and the profound influence of his parents shaped his unwaver-

ing dedication to youth ministries and advocacy for social justice. Now, with a wealth of firsthand experiences and a burning desire to keep making a difference, Adrian continues his meaningful contributions to society and inspires others to join him on this path toward a more equitable and compassionate world.

For more information on NSI, contact Adrian Pereira at +6012-290 0756 or email pereira@nsinitiative.net.

Source photo: North-South Initiative and Adrian Pereira facebook



WORD IN PROGRESS

Karen-Michaela Tan

Sitting in the front pew at my mother's funeral, I could not help but be grateful for the fact that mum had a Catholic spouse, daughter and granddaughter to pray her to heaven. If God will have it, I hope to do for my father what I did for mum: cross his quickly cooling forehead with holy water, and recite the Divine Mercy chaplet as I wait for the cogs of the funerary machinery to begin to turn.

As a Catholic, I will have recourse to a faith community I can call on for help, a parish with a funeral parlour where my parents can rest, and a priest to commend them as they leave the mortal world. As a trained lector, I read Romans 14: 7-12 to and for my mother, because I believe her life was truly lived for the Lord, and as such, she herself became a blessing to others.

I have already chosen my father's first reading for his funeral Mass, just as his columbarium niche is already waiting, together with my mother's and mine. Whilst a family of four, there will only be mum, dad and I in a row at Lutheran Garden, because my brother, though baptised by the full swimming pool dunk of the Pentecostals, is no longer practising.

Thus, should I die young(er), it will be left to my Catholic daughter – should she be old, or capable enough – to ensure I am given the complete rites of my beloved Church. Not

wanting to lay the burden on someone prospectively so young, I laid the groundwork for my death when I moved into my present home 14 years ago.

From my devotedly Catholic and vigorously participating mother-in-law (baptised only in her 60s, with her paraplegic husband after he suffered a massive stroke), I was able to find out the name of the BEC coordinator in the area which my then-young family was to move to.

Before we took full residence, I had approached the kindly gentleman at Mass and introduced myself. The month we moved into the new house, I attended my first BEC meeting, and did not miss a meeting until the COVID-19 lockdown.

As I got to know the Catholic neighbourhood community better, I was comfortable enough to speak openly to my BEC coordinator about the not-so-pious reason I became such an active member. Quite the traditional, strong and silent Indian gentleman, Jude Francis was taken aback when I made him promise that if I were to die while still in the neighbourhood, that the BEC would take care of the necessary. You see, I am one of the many who rolled her eyes at the warning in 2 Corinthians 6:14 (Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common?). Love — declared the me who was hellbent on marrying a doctor since I could not be one — is enough.

What a person in love fails to understand is

that love, like the seed of the Sower in Matthew 13:3-9 needs good soil in which to grow. And for Catholics, that soil is a common faith. Decision making, child raising, and eking out a living are already hard aspects of married life. Not to have a common faith on which decisions are guided by is akin to driving an Axia on a 4x4 trail. It's not impossible, but it takes a lot more effort, ability and skill than if one were driving a vehicle suited for the course. And the chances of breaking an axle are much higher. Add to it a co-pilot who doesn't speak the same language, and you are right and royally buggered.

That is why I needed a contingency plan. I had made my marriage bed and laid in it, but I needed to ensure my funeral bier was in good order. I am grateful that the relationships I have cultivated with the members of my BEC assure me of the prayers and support my family would need to send me heavenward.

My mother's funeral was a test run of sorts. With one text to my BEC group, the well-oiled machinery began running. As most BECs are often largely made up of elderly folk, death is a regular occurrence. Call us boring or staid, but we Catholics know exactly what to do when death's dark shade settles on the people in our community. By the afternoon of my mother's wake, my closest BEC friends had gathered to pray for my mother, and support me.

The Bangsar Baru BEC that I grew up in, whose matronly women members loved and coddled me, also showed up, despite some

members being even older than my deceased mother. Women once so stout and steady came with canes and walkers, turning up on arthritic legs to hold me and comfort me because I no longer had a mother to do it. Friends from the Church of the Holy Rosary where I had been a lector for the morning Masses swooped in to organise music, and prayers, taking the burden of administration off my shoulders.

Every step of the way, from funeral parlour to cremation, was marked by the presence of one or another BEC friend. Possibly the most significant moment was when my mother's casket was being wheeled into the incinerator. Somehow Kenny Nunis, one of the few, constant male members of BEC St Joseph, was at my side, and it was he who put a hand on my arm when I made an instinctive move to rush towards the coffin one last time. No words, but the kindness in the touch of this man who I rarely communicated with out of prayer meets, brought me back to a semblance of control.

As I continue to play whatever part I can in my BEC, as a parent in my teen's catechism class, it is my hope that when I no longer have breath in me to console those who mourn me, that my Catholic community will be the consolation and strength of those I leave behind.

● **Karen-Michaela Tan** is a poet, writer and editor who seeks out God's presence in the human condition and looks for ways to put the Word of God into real action.

PEOPLE & VOICES

WYD conversion to Christ — through a crucible

As hundreds of thousands of pilgrims embarked on their journey to Portugal earlier this month, I was reminded fondly of so many other World Youth Day (WYD) events of the past.

My first WYD, and probably the most significant for us in the United States, was held in Denver in 1993, exactly 30 years ago. But I had been tangentially involved with the earlier events in Santiago de Compostela, Spain, (1989); and Czestochowa, Poland, (1991), in my youth outreach work at Franciscan University of Steubenville. I and others were taking notice as the new phenomenon of WYD exploded in the Catholic Church.

When I heard that the 1993 event was going to be in the US, I started planning immediately to organise a trip on behalf of Franciscan U. We took 800 teens and young adults to Denver, and it was one of the most memorable experiences of my life. I saw the impact and long-term fruits of the event and would eventually plan and lead three more trips: Paris in 1997, Rome in 2000 and Madrid in 2011.

Over the years, I have seen both the challenges and the fruits of the WYD experience. In Madrid in 2011, a priest from Phoenix offered Mass for a group of us; during his homily, he said: "In the crucible of suffering and difficulty is when we really grow."

We had all experienced significant hardship throughout the entire trip that year, and his parting words reminded us that God often accomplishes what he is desiring to do in us through hardship and difficulty. This was the last event that I attended personally, and these words captured well all four of my WYD experiences.

There is something about a WYD pilgrimage experience that challenges us to an intense form of growth and purification.

In 1993 in Denver, many participants suffered heat exhaustion at the final event. Young people were leaving in ambulances all during the closing Mass; and by the time it was over, our group was missing 35 teens. I'll never forget going to the main medical tent to get infor-



Clockwise from top left: The huge crowd at Cherry Creek Park in Denver, 1993, is shown as John Paul II prays with youth at Mass; Sisters of Life smile alongside youth in Sydney, 2008; and colourful flags stand out in Madrid, 2011, in Cibeles Square. (photo/Courtesy of Denver Archdiocese and CNA photos; Madrid photo by Lorna Cruz)

mation and being given only the names and addresses of four hospitals in the area — the overwhelmed medical personnel had stopped tracking who was sent where. It took us more than 12 hours to track down the missing teens, which delayed our cross-country bus ride back to Steubenville. By the time we finally got back home, I had not slept for almost three full days, and we all knew what the priest meant by "the crucible of suffering and difficulty."

I experienced suffering and difficulty at every one of the four trips I attended, and memories like these are commonplace among WYD Day attendees. To dwell too long on the hardships, though, would be to miss the whole point: "That's when we really grow."

This supernatural growth has certainly been true for me and in the lives of so many other WYD pilgrims I've met.

My friend Aaron, who attended WYD in Denver as a 15-year-old, said, "At that time I was running away from God, habitually in mortal sin and grasping ravenously at anything that would bring any momentary reprieve from the void I felt inside. That day, something was unearthed in the deepest parts of me. When John Paul II arrived at Cherry Creek Park, I felt waves of the Holy Spirit. ... As he spoke, I felt exposed and seen by God. He exposed my sin; he knew my shame and yet he loved me with a love that was so intense and personal."

"That experience," Aaron said, "awoke in me the mission that God created me for and gave me an unrelenting hunger in my heart for his love and presence in my life."

Another fellow pilgrim, Natalia, recalled a homily she heard at another WYD Youth

Mass: "The priest shared that Jesus desires to be our best friend," she said. "He invited anyone who wanted to respond to that call and be best friends with Jesus to come down. From the top auditorium seats, I walked down toward the altar to accept his invitation. That invitation changed my life."

"I went home in love with Jesus," she said. "I invited Him into all of my decisions — where was I going to go to college? Which friends should I hang out with? How should I treat my sisters? In fact, meeting Jesus as my best friend changed me so much that my two younger sisters cite my conversion as a catalyst for their own relationships with Jesus."

"I used to think God was a distant god who ruled the earth but was far removed from my personal experience," Natalia said. "My encounter with Jesus as Friend opened me up to the personal nature of God."

Ben, who attended WYD in Rome in 2000, was struck by his experience of the universality of the Church. "I remember standing in this sea of people in St Peter's Square in Rome," he said, "surrounded by over a million other young Catholics, and thinking, 'This is the Body of Christ!' We were from different countries, we looked different, we spoke different languages, and we had different hopes and desires, but we were all together because we loved Jesus."

He said Pope John Paul II's closing homily "gave me permission to expect God to do great things in and with me — to trust that anything was possible with Him, to believe in the unbelievable, and to wait with expectant faith to see Him act."

"I am blessed to get to share that same 'expectant' reality with my children every day, to help them grow in their trust of our good Father — and He never disappoints." — **By Jim Beckman, Register**

● **Jim Beckman** serves as the executive director of ImpactCenter, a Catholic apostolate dedicated to supporting and caring for those in ministry roles.



Fr Ron Rolheiser

It comes and it goes ...

The 13th century Persian poet and Sufi mystic, Rumi, once said that this is how faith moves in our lives: *We live with a deep secret that sometimes we know, then not, and then know again.*

New York columnist David Brooks says something quite similar. In his book, *The Second Mountain*, he shares how he is trying to live out both a Jewish and a Christian faith. For the most part, he says, it can work. After all, Jesus tried it. However, the hard question he is sometimes asked is: Do you believe in the resurrection of Jesus, believe that Jesus' body was gone from the tomb three days after His crucifixion? His answer: "It comes and it goes. The border stalker in me is still strong."

If most of us who profess ourselves as Christians were really honest we would, I submit, give a similar answer to the question about the reality of Jesus' resurrection. Do we believe it actually happened? *It comes and it goes.* Perhaps not intellectually, but existentially.

It's one thing to profess intellectually that we believe in something, it's another to actually give credence to that in our lives. Jesus Himself makes that distinction in His parable about a man having two sons and asking them to go work in his field. The first son answers yes, but never

goes. The second son says no, but ends up going and doing the work. Thus, Jesus asks, which of the two is the real son?

Well, Brooks' answer straddles the two, a border stalker. In truth, we are both sons, saying yes, then no, then yes again. John Shea, commenting on the ups and downs of Jesus' first disciples and their vacillation between enthusiastic following and abandoning their faith dream, calls this a struggle (for them and for us) between divine invitation and human response, between great assurance and great vacillation.

And nowhere is this more evident in us than in how we vacillate vis-à-vis whether we truly believe in the central invitation of all within Christianity, that is, do we take the resurrection of Jesus seriously enough to actually redefine ourselves, redefine the meaning of life, and make it a prism through which we shape how we should be living? Do we believe strongly enough in the resurrection of Jesus to take radical, common sense-defying risks in our lives? If we truly believed Jesus was resurrected it would reshape our lives.

Most of us, I'm sure, are familiar with the famous lines from Julian of Norwich. Reflecting on what the resurrection of Jesus means for us, she says that, if it is

true, if Jesus actually rose from the dead, if God actually brought a dead body out of a grave, then we have the absolute assurance (and the confidence that goes with that) to believe that *In the end, all will be well, and all will be well, and every manner of being will be well.*

Her equation is right, if the resurrection actually happened; the rest follows, the ending to our story of and that of the world itself has already been written, and we have absolute assurance that it's a happy ending.

But, do we believe it? For the majority of us, if we were as honest as David Brooks, our existential answer would, I believe, be the same as his: *it comes and it goes.* Granted, it can be humbling to admit that, but that admission can free us from denial, help us understand better some of the dynamics of faith, and point us towards where we need to be going in terms of an ongoing conversion.

Once at a religious conference, I heard this comment from one of the keynote speakers, a woman who, like Dorothy Day, had been working with the poor on the streets for many years. She shared words to this effect: I'm a Christian and I work on the streets with the poor. Ultimately, Jesus is my reason for doing this. But I can do

this work for years and never mention Jesus' name as I work because I believe God is mature enough that He doesn't demand to be the centre of our conscious attention all the time. You can guess that comment was met with some very mixed reactions.

But, at the end of the day, she's right, and what she's sharing isn't an unhealthy straddling of anything, or even exactly Brooks' or Rumi's experience of how faith works in our existential lives. *It comes and goes.* What she's sharing can help free us from some of the false guilt we feel when faith seems to have let go and we feel the earthy reality of our lives so tangibly and existentially that, for that moment, we seem not to know the secret of faith and appear to be vacillating in the face of a great assurance.

It comes and it goes. Indeed. We live with a deep secret that sometimes we know, then not, and then know again.

● **Oblate Fr Ron Rolheiser, theologian, teacher, and award-winning author, is President of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, TX. He writes a weekly column that is carried in over 90 newspapers around the world. He can be contacted through his website www.ronrolheiser.com**

SOCIAL JUSTICE



Making a Difference
Tony Magliano

Catholic Church's best kept secret

The Catholic Church has a big secret. It is so powerful, challenging, and relevant, that if every bishop, priest, religious and layperson was committed to communicating and implementing this secret, it would turn society upside-down and transform the world!

However, revealing its contents, and urging the full application of its message, would surely cause great controversy. The Church's leaders would come under attack from both conservatives and liberals. They would be characterised as naïve and acting outside the acceptable bounds of Church leadership.

Therefore, most Church leaders — clergy and lay leaders alike — have opted to tread lightly, sadly guaranteeing that "Catholic social teaching" will remain our best-kept secret.

The best-kept secret is that the Catholic Church is blessed with over 130 years of outstanding social justice and peace documents authored by popes, Vatican Council II, world synods of bishops and national conferences of bishops. Sadly, they attract more dust than readers.

It is imperative that we get out of our comfort zones and disciple ourselves to make decisions not from our political preferences, but rather to see, judge, and act in light of the countercultural Gospel, and its modern application: Catholic social teaching!

But because Catholic social teaching's foundational tenets of love, social justice and peace boldly challenge governments, corporations, and societies, as well as rich and powerful individuals to fairly share their wealth and power with everyone — especially the poor, the vulnerable and mother earth — and because these teachings insist that war preparation and war-making must completely give way to Gospel nonviolent peacemaking, Catholic social teaching is to put it mildly: a tough sell.

But 30 years ago, to their credit, the US bishops took



(photo/pvnccdsb.on.ca)

on the challenge of selling the Catholic Church's best kept secret and penned *Communities of Salt and Light: Reflections on the Social Mission of the Parish*.

In this engaging document, the bishops wrote "We need to build local communities [parishes] of faith where our social teaching is central, not fringe; where social ministry is integral, not optional; where it is the work of every believer, not just the mission of a few committed people and committees."

The bishops lament this sad fact and call us out of complacency: "For too many parishioners, our [Catholic] social teaching is an unknown tradition. In too many parishes, social ministry is a task for a few, not a challenge for the entire parish community. We believe we are just beginning to realise our potential as a

community of faith committed to serve those in need and to work for greater justice.

"The parishes that are leaders in this area see social ministry not as a specialised ministry, but as an integral part of the entire parish. They weave the Catholic social mission into every aspect of parish life — worship, formation, and action. They follow a strategy of integration and collaboration, which keeps social ministry from becoming isolated or neglected."

Social ministry that is based on Catholic social teaching, tirelessly strives to meet peoples' direct immediate needs — especially the poor and vulnerable from conception to natural death — and works equally hard to address and uproot the root causes of the many social injustices that keep people poor and oppressed (see: <https://bit.ly/3K6206z> and <https://www.crs.org/resource-center/CST-101>.)

The US bishops' document — *Communities of Salt and Light: Reflections on the Social Mission of the Parish* — is so important that it truly needs to be reflectively read by every parishioner, in every parish worldwide. And although it is specifically written for parishes, it can, and should, be equally taken to heart by Catholic school principals and teachers at all levels — kindergarten through graduate school (see: <https://bit.ly/3Y328JW>).

The US bishops have prepared helpful resources to assist parishes in making "Communities of Salt and Light" a wonderful reality (see: <https://bit.ly/44zMqIX>).

Catholic social teaching could become a tremendously effective tool for building a just and peaceful world, if we would regularly read it, pray with it, teach it, preach it, and live it!

● **Tony Magliano is an internationally syndicated Catholic social justice and peace columnist. He can be reached at tmag6@comcast.net.**

Little Catholics' Corner

Hello children of God

The Gospel reading tells a special story about Jesus performing an amazing miracle. He walked on the water, showing that He has power over nature. Peter, one of Jesus' disciples, saw this and wanted to follow in Jesus' footsteps. He asked Jesus to call him to come and walk on water too. Jesus called him, and to everyone's astonishment, Peter started walking on water!

But soon, the wind made Peter feel scared and distracted. He began to sink into the water. Thankfully, Jesus quickly reached out and helped him up.

This story teaches us that just like Peter, we should also try to follow in Jesus' footsteps. When Jesus wants us to do something, He will give us the strength and grace to do it, just as He gave Peter the power to walk on water. However, if we lose sight of Jesus and only focus on how difficult things might be, we might struggle to do what God asks, just like Peter when he started to sink.

But don't worry! If you find yourself having a hard time doing the right thing, remember that it's time to turn back to Jesus. He is always there to help and support us when we need it.

August 15 is the Feast of the Assumption. Remember to say a little prayer to thank Mother Mary for her intercessions.

Love, Aunty Gwen

JESUS WALKS ON WATER

(MATTHEW 14:22-33)

CIRCLE THE CORRECT ANSWER

1. What did Jesus do while He was alone on the mountain?



2. Where were the disciples?



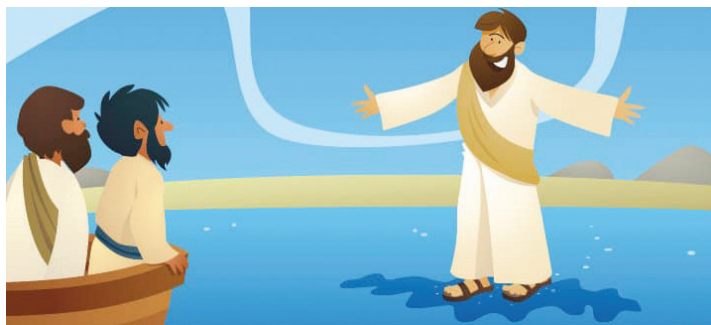
3. What was the weather on the water?



4. How did Jesus get to the boat?

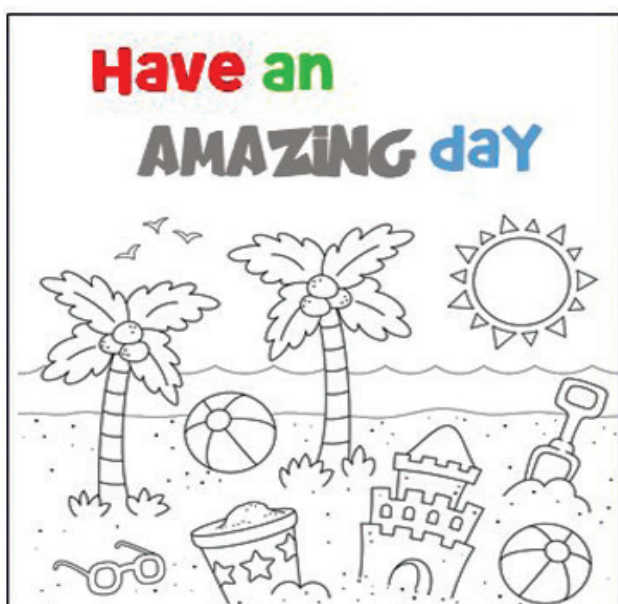


5. Who tried to walk on the water to Jesus?



COLOUR THESE PICTURES

Then cut out each image, glue it on a piece of poster paper and give it to a friend or loved one to help brighten their day.



YOUTH

AUGUST 13, 2023

PROJECT RE:START BY CDM YOUTH

REVIVAL IS COMING, THE REAWAKENING IS IMMINENT

By Jofintha Joseph

SHAH ALAM: The youth of the Church of the Divine Mercy were revitalised by *Project Re:Start*, a faith and fun-filled campaign launch designed to reignite their faith in an interactive and memorable way, July 23. This project marks the beginning of a six-month long parish youth campaign, *RE:VAV* running from July to December.

The afternoon event was opened with a prayer by assistant parish priest, Fr Michel Dass. Fr Michel stirred the hearts of the youth with his words of encouragement, urging them to keep strong in their faith as the young future leaders of the Church. With over 120 participants, the core team gave a brief introduction about the Youth Ministry

(CDMYM) before proceeding with a treasure hunt all around the church grounds as a way to break the ice.

Once the participants had broken a sweat, and budding friendships formed, the youth ministry led the participants in a beautiful time of praise and worship. For some, this was their first encounter with this form of prayer, and their hearts softened to the songs of praise to the Lord.

With hearts now open, the young congregation were seated for a thought-provoking session on relationship and love by Stephen Lee. The youth were called to consider Catholic values in the relationships they form with those around them, as well as bringing Christ-like love to the world. By delicately weaving the realities and struggles faced in



such an uncertain phase of life and presenting them through the lens of Jesus' teachings and Catholic beliefs, the youth were equipped with the skills and mechanisms to navigate young adulthood in a healthier way.

"Stephen's words of wisdom have given me a clearer insight on love and relationships that could be applied in many aspects of my life," testified Melina, a

young participant of *Project Re:Start*.

Empowered by the Holy Spirit, the evening concluded with a closing prayer from a core member of CDMYM, praying for all to have the courage and wisdom to apply the knowledge they had gathered in their daily lives.

While *Project Re:Start* has concluded, the *RE:VAV* campaign has only just begun. Keyne, a young international student who had joined *Project Re:Start*, was grateful to be able to find a community of friends through youth-led activities in the church, and anticipates joining more initiatives in the future.

The entire length of the campaign cuts across race, gender, and language to bring up a community of young people united for Christ, passionate in prayer, and ready for life. With this spark, the Church holds hope that the flames of faith will ignite a revival, reawaken the youth, and send forth waves of joy throughout the parish.



Assumption's young showcase their talents

PETALING JAYA: The Church of the Assumption held a talentime competition exclusively for youth below the age of 18 on July 9 and 16.

The primary objective was to actively engage and encourage the participation of our youth community, allowing them to display their unique talents and raise funds for the much-needed renovations in church. It was a fantastic opportunity for both the youth and the church community to come together in a joyous celebration of talent and unity.

The event was spearheaded by a committee of volunteers comprising members from all age groups who worked diligently under the spiritual guidance of our parish priest, Fr Leonard Lexson, and priest-in-residence, Fr Biju Mathews.

There was a total of six categories split into two levels, one for kindergarten and primary school learners, and another for

secondary students. The kindergarten and primary categories included a fashion show, Bible knowledge and word search. The secondary students received more challenging categories such as dancing, singing and performing instrumental music. While participation for both levels was average, the effort the parents put in to bring their children to the event gave us the confidence to execute other such events.

The kindergarteners mostly participated in the fashion show, and they dazzled the audience with their adorable outfits. At first, they were shy and scared, but after a while, the children walked onstage with confidence, without needing to be coaxed.

The primary students mainly took part in the word search and Bible knowledge quizzes, leaving the audience impressed with their performances that exceeded all expectations. Moving on to the secondary



students' category, we witnessed five talented contestants, including the teenage parishioner DJ Lollipop, who holds a record in the Malaysian Book of Records, a skillful dancer, and a student playing the recorder, among others.

Although it wasn't a large-scale event, the contestants, organisers, and audiences had a great time. — *By James Soyza*



Be Christ's witnesses to the world

KUALA LUMPUR: Nineteen confirmands were added to the growing army of **Christ at the Church of the Holy Rosary** July 23. These Form Five students who received the sacrament were from both the English and Chinese sections of the parish and were also joined by two confirmands from the Cathedral of St John the Evangelist.

The main celebrant, Archbishop Julian Leow, reminded the confirmands to use their youth and energy to work in the Lord's vineyard to proclaim His Glory in the many avenues that lie open in the service of humanity. "God gives us all opportunities to start and serve

in a world filled with both grain and dandelion'. His Grace encouraged everyone to always make correct choices in life and to be the grain where they are or face the sure consequences of being burnt as dandelion in the eternal fire at harvest time.

The meaningful ceremony was followed by a formal tea reception hosted by the parish. Also present were families and friends of the confirmands, parish priest Fr Dominic Tan and visiting priest from the Church of Velangkanni Medan (Indonesia), Fr James Bharataputra SJ. — **By Dempsey Fernandez**



KUALA LUMPUR: The conferment of the Sacrament of Confirmation at the **Church of St Joseph**, July 23, was a momentous occasion attended by 27 students.

The atmosphere was filled with faith and joy as Archbishop Julian Leow presided over the celebration, with parish priest, Fr Frederick Joseph, concelebrating. Among the candidates were 19 students from the catechetical ministry, three from the Myanmar Zomi Community, and five candidates from the RCIA programme, adding cultural diversity and a profound sense of belonging to the event.

During his homily, Archbishop Julian emphasised the importance of the Sacrament of Confirmation, urging the candidates to be true witnesses of Christ's love by spreading goodness in the world.

The celebration concluded with Fr Frederick's thanksgiving note.

The students had earlier at-



tended a Confirmation camp in Port Dickson. They were hosted and facilitated by Richard Ganesh, Gabriel Moses, Tomson Scaria, Angeline and Dr Sheila Jeremy, as well as parish youth Teren Anthony and Andronicus.

The camp's theme, *You are salt and light of the world*, encompassed topics like family, church, society, relationships, self-reflection, and Jesus' teachings.

A special session, *Recognising talent in others*, spread positiv-

ity through notes of appreciation placed in envelopes for the students.

They committed to contributing to the church after their sacramental journey, which was presented during the Mass to Fr Frederick.

A powerful moment of inner healing, led by Fr Frederick, encouraged forgiveness, emotional healing, and spiritual growth, touching students profoundly. — **By Isaac Cornelius, Angeline and Jane Buniel**

Alpha camp as preparation for Confirmation

PUCHONG: The Confirmation class of the Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe (OLOG) had their Confirmation camp at Villa Dominic July 21-23. The Alpha team from the Cathedral of St John conducted the Alpha Sessions. OLOG parish priest, Fr Raymond Pereira, made time to join them.

Upon arrival, the participants were greeted by the welcoming committee from Villa Dominic. After dinner, the Alpha team had a short introduction as well as some ice-breaker games. The participants were also told that each one, whether participant or facilitator, would have an envelope put up for each one to write affirmations. This was an interesting experience as it was wonderful watching each one taking time during sessions to write affirmations and fill each envelope.

The next day, the morning sessions focused on *Who is the Holy Spirit and What does He do?* and *How can I make the most of the rest of my life?* After each session, there were

group discussions. The participants and the facilitators were already preassigned and divided into six groups.

After lunch, the sessions were on *How can I resist evil?* and *Does God heal today?* This was to prepare them for Inner Healing session

later that night. The facilitators and the team spent time praying over the confirmands. One to one counselling sessions were also available for those who needed it.

Although the day seemed packed with sessions, the team did ensure that the 17-year-

olds had fun with some games. There were mind games that got them all excited, as well as a Bible quiz to test their knowledge. It was amazing to see them responding and being able to answer most of the questions.

Sunday began with Mass which was animated by the confirmands.

After breakfast, the final session *How can I be filled with the Holy Spirit?* was held. This session ended with the facilitators and team laying hands on the participants as a send-off.

Overall they had an amazing experience. This weekend experience not only benefited the confirmands but also the facilitators who were present. Being able to foster a bond with these young people help us reach out to them on a deeper level. The commitment that we made in the beginning to them, not just to impart faith but also to be a firm friend, is one they can count on even after their Sacrament of Confirmation. — **Bridget Antoinette Pereira**



Learning to be free, total, faithful and fruitful

KLANG: A TOB (Theology of the Body) camp was held at the Church of the Holy Redeemer recently for upper secondary students.

It was an incredible experience in which they learned various ways of how God's love appears, their purpose in life, and how to live a pure and free life.

Over the two days, we progressively learnt more about our campmates. The ice-breakers games hosted by Form Five students, helped to relieve the initial awkwardness in the room. Some students even won

prizes for participating!

On the first day, Sr Retta Savariannan FDCC instructed us on the distinction between chastity and abstinence as well as how to live in a state of celibacy. "She told me that it's crucial to recognise the distinction between abstinence and chastity," said Anna, a Form Five student. "I should obey it out of my own free will and not just because it is the law of the land or because I am instructed to."

Following that came Gregory Carver's lesson on lust and love, in which he explained

that while lust and love may appear to be the same, love is a much stronger and more gratifying emotion that may help us live a happier life. Through the acronym "FTFF" (free, total, faithful, and fruitful), we deepened our understanding of love. Teacher Francis suggested that we evaluate whether particular actions were FTFF or not. Continuing on, Miss Catherine led us in adoration as we watched a touching video to close off the day. The video captured our hearts and thoughts. Gloria, another Form Five student, claimed the lesson was "self-fulfilling and helped me to be aware of how God's love is everlasting even when we fall sometimes".

The following day, Sr Retta discussed what "vocation" meant. It is "not a career or job, but God's calling" was something we all learnt. Then, we discovered how God made men and women to connect and share a joyful life, as well as the true meaning of dating and marriage. The final lesson was heartwarming, focusing on leading a good, free life and how, even though we may slip up occasionally, the church is always ready to provide a hand and

God never condemns us.

After the sessions, a final activity allowed us to express ourselves by asking the opposing gender questions that we might not typically be able to. This was a novel experience that allowed many of us to learn. It was generally an eye-opening one.

Although I was initially hesitant to participate, I soon discovered that my reservations were unfounded. I truly loved learning more about my faith and expanding my knowledge on certain areas that I was unsure about.

Aside from that, one aspect of the TOB camp that I truly loved was the opportunity to strengthen existing friendships and forge new ones! That makes me very happy because it can be challenging to do so, and it has inspired me to value the people with whom I spend my time. I also recognise the value of friendships. I truly feel that if you have the opportunity to learn more about TOB, you should take it.

This was a genuinely amazing camp, and I hope that I can remember what I learned and continue to follow these teachings. — **By Gabriel Choong Wei Han (Form Five)**



Francis Lim, one of the presenters during one of the sessions.

Fr Maiccal Sinnappan laid to rest

TAIPING: Fr Maiccal Sinnappan passed away peacefully on August 1. He was 71.

Cardinal-elect Sebastian Francis was the main presider of the requiem Mass at the Taiping Catholic Church (TCC) August 3.

In his opening address, the prelate poetically said, "Here lies a child of God, a son of God, a child of Mary, a son of Mary, a disciple of Christ, a Catholic priest, a relative, a friend. So, we praise God for his life, his death, and what happens after death. That is what we are here to celebrate."

Fr Simon Anand preached a moving sermon in Tamil and English on the Bible verse from Luke 23:43, where Jesus, on the cross, promised the repentant sinner, "I can guarantee this truth: Today you will be with Me in paradise."

Jesus' reference to "paradise" is believed to mean the original state of humanity before the first sin. It represents a state of eternal happiness with God, just as Adam and Eve experienced before their fall.

Sin disrupted this state of paradise, introducing death as a consequence (Romans 6:23). However, God never desired the end of life; instead, He intended for life to continue in a different form after death.

"Today, we are here to pray that Jesus' words reverberate, once again, in the soul of Fr Maiccal Sinnappan," said Fr Simon.

The ultimate goal for humanity is to live with God and other divine beings in eternal happiness. The means to attain this goal is through goodness and living a virtuous life, as depicted in Psalm 23.

"I am humbled and delighted to tell you Fr Maiccal allowed God's good works to flow through him. Let us remember not to suspend God's goodness in someone's life when only their weaknesses and frailties seem to linger in our minds. Sometimes we over glorify weakness and sin, forgetting the grace, beauty, and goodness that has come through someone."

On the cross, Jesus also promised an end to suffering, pain, and sickness because the internal conflict between mind, body, and God's divine will has ended.

Quoting St Paul, Fr Simon said, "we are destined

for greater things and forgiveness is the key. So, today I invite all of you to forgive Fr Maiccal if he has hurt or wronged you in any way. And for us to be forgiven by God if we have caused pain or suffering in his life."

Fr Simon commended Fr Maiccal, who lost his mother at birth, for giving himself to the Blessed Mother and having a daily devotion to the Rosary, a habit handed down by his grandmother. His diligence in reciting the Rosary points us to the third and fourth promises of paradise. The third is a deeper understanding of God, ourself, and the created realities. The fourth promise is complete liberation from sin.

Fr Maiccal's niece, Jacinta, expressed her gratitude to Cardinal-elect Sebastian for being a fatherly figure, to his best friend Msgr Stephen Liew for his love, care, hospitality, and generosity, to Deacon Charles, his caregiver Madam Julie and the parishioners of St Louis (TCC). The family also humbly asked all present to forgive the late priest's shortcomings and to celebrate the love he shared with all.

Jacinta added that her uncle loved his priesthood, "So let us continue to pray for vocations. Lastly, please continue to pray for his soul, until we reach heaven's shore."

Msgr Stephen said the TCC was blessed and privileged to share the life of Fr Maiccal for the past one and a half years. He graciously thanked the bishop and his fellow priests for celebrating the farewell liturgy. He also thanked everyone who played a significant role in caring for Fr Maiccal over the past few months.

Before the Rite of Commendation, Cardinal-elect Sebastian, on behalf of the diocese, thanked Msgr Stephen and the Taiping Catholic community for warmly welcoming and providing a home for Fr Maiccal, especially during the last phase of his life.

— **By Gwen Manickam**



MEMORIAM

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In Loving Memory of



Mathew De Silva
11 August 1907 -
21 April 2006

Jessy De Silva
2 March 1923 -
26 September 1998

We love you papa and mummy.
You are both dearly missed
and fondly remembered by
your loving family, relatives and friends.

20th Anniversary In Loving Memory of



Margaret Boniface Gomez
Departed: 13-08-2003

*Even after we lose one
we hold so dear,
The warmth of her love
keeps her memory near.*

Sadly missed by
loved ones.

In Loving Memory

15th Anniversary

24th Anniversary



CARMEL JACOB PEREIRA
11.9.1928 - 10.8.2008

*You have gone no further
from us than to God, and
God is very near.*

Deeply missed by beloved family and loved ones.



ALOYSIUS CARMEL PEREIRA
12.5.1960 - 8.7.1999

*Remember me
as forever loving you.*

6th Anniversary In Loving Memory of



Mark Toh
Departed: 13 August 2017

*'Though sad, memories of you
always bring smiles to our faces.
Though painful, we are still
learning to live without you.
Though you are gone, we will
always love and cherish you
in our hearts.*

*Deeply missed and
fondly remembered by
family and loved ones.*

10th Anniversary In Loving Memory of our beloved Dad



J. D. NEVIS RAJ
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25-03-1928
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*When the
cares of my
heart are
many,
your
consolations
cheer my
soul.*

Psalm 94:19



The clergy wheeling the coffin out after the funeral Mass. (photo/Sam Gopal)

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REST IN PEACE

Recover Eucharistic adoration in the Church

LISBON, Portugal: Pope Francis reflected on the urgency of taking up again “the prayer of Adoration” before the tabernacle to recover “the taste and passion for evangelisation” in a message addressed to bishops, priests, deacons, consecrated women religious, and seminarians.

“I would like to ask a question here, but each one should answer it interiorly. How do I pray? Like a parrot — blah blah blah blah? Or taking a nap in front of the tabernacle because I don’t know how to talk to the Lord? I pray? How do I pray? Only in Adoration, only before the Lord, can the taste and passion for evangelisation be recovered,” the Pontiff said, during his August 2 homily for vespers at the Jerónimos Monastery.

After noting that “to trust every day in the Lord and in His Word, words are not enough” but rather, “a lot of prayer is needed,” he pointed out to the approximately 1,100 attendees that the Church has abandoned prayer in front of the Blessed Sacrament.

“Curiously, the prayer of Adoration — we have lost it. We have lost it, and everyone — priests, bishops, consecrated men and women, laypeople — have to recover it. It’s to be in silence, before the Lord,” Francis urged.

In this context, the Pope invited his listeners to follow the example of St Teresa of Calcutta who, despite being “involved in so

many things in life, never gave up Adoration, even at times when her faith wavered and she wondered if it was all true or not.”

“So, in prayer, the temptation to carry out a pastoral ministry of nostalgia and complaining is overcome,” he added.

To further exemplify the need to redirect our gaze to Eucharistic adoration, the Pontiff recalled the anecdote of a nun who “complained about everything” in her convent.

“In a convent there was a nun who, I don’t know what her name was, but they changed her name and called her ‘Sister Lamentela’ [the whiner]. How many times do we transform our inabilities, our disappointment, into ‘lamentela’ [being whiners]? And leaving behind these ‘lamentelas,’ one gets the strength to sail out to sea, without ideologies, without worldliness. The spiritual worldliness that gets into us and which engenders clericalism not only in priests; clericalised laymen are worse than priests,” he explained.

Pope Francis stressed that clericalism is “one of the most serious evils that can happen to the Church” and, consequently, ruin it.

During his homily, Pope Francis also called for overcoming the aforementioned difficulties “without ideologies and without worldliness, animated by a single desire: that the Gospel reach everyone.”

Using the example of a young saint from

Lisbon, St John of Brito, he recalled that all Catholics “are called to immerse our nets in the time in which we live, to dialogue with everyone, to make the Gospel understandable, even when doing so we may run the risk of a storm.”

“Be fishers of men. Don’t be afraid. That’s not proselytising, it’s announcing the Gospel that [draws forth a response],” the Holy Father explained.

“Therefore, fishing for people and pulling them out of the water means helping them to get out of the abyss where they had sunk, saving them from the evil that threatens to drown them, resuscitating them from all forms of death. This without proselytising, but with love,” he added.

And so, according to the Pope, “one of the signs of some ecclesial movements that are going wrong is proselytism.”

“When an ecclesial movement or a diocese or a bishop or a priest or a nun or a layperson proselytises, that’s not Christian. Christian is inviting, welcoming, helping, but without proselytising,” he said.

Pope Francis added that the “Gospel, in fact, is an announcement of life in the sea of death; it is an announcement of freedom in the whirlwinds of slavery, of light in the abyss of darkness.”

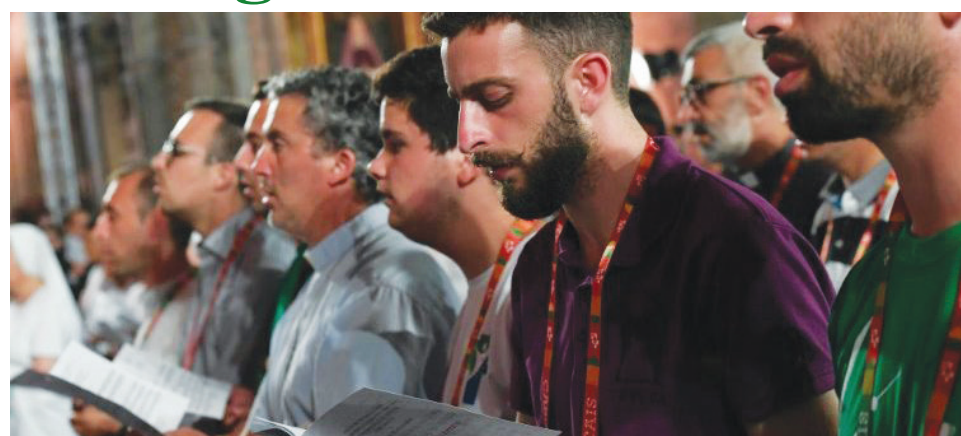
“We, as the Church, have been entrusted



Pope Francis gives the homily at vespers at the Jerónimos Monastery in Lisbon, Portugal, Aug 2, 2023. (Vatican Media)

with the task of immersing ourselves in the waters of this sea, casting the net of the Gospel, without pointing fingers, without accusing, but bringing to the people of our time a proposal for life, that of Jesus: to bring the welcome of the Gospel, to invite them to the celebration,” he concluded. — **By Diego Lopez Marina, CNA**

Pope meets privately with Portuguese abuse victims



Vespers at Lisbon’s Jeronimos Monastery with Pope Francis. (Vatican Media)

LISBON, Portugal: Pope Francis met privately with victims of clerical sexual abuse in Portugal, Matteo Bruni, Director of the Holy See Press Office, confirmed in a brief statement to accredited journalists.

The encounter, on August 2, the first day of the Pope’s Apostolic Visit to Portugal to celebrate World Youth Day 2023, took place at the Apostolic Nunciature in a reserved context.

A statement by the Holy See Press Office Director said: “This evening, following institutional and Church meetings, Pope Francis received in the Nunciature a group of 13 people, victims of abuse by members of the clergy, who were accompanied by several representatives of the Portuguese Church institutions in charge of the protection of minors.”

He specified the meeting took place “in an

atmosphere of intense listening and lasted over an hour,” ending shortly after 8.15 pm local time.

The meeting followed Vespers in Lisbon’s Jeronimos Monastery, during which the Holy Father called on clergy and religious to combat clerical sexual abuse and always listen to the victims.

In February 2023, the Independent Commission for the Study of Sexual Abuse of Children in the Catholic Church in Portugal produced a final report releasing validated testimonies relating to abuse cases that occurred between 1950 and 2022, pointing to over 4,800 victims.

Pope Francis has repeatedly called upon all in the Church to combat “the scourge” of abuses that have taken place and to help victims. — **Vatican News**

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